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THE
HISTORY OF FLORENCE

1434-1492



THE HISTORY
OF
FLORENCE

UNDER
THE DOMINATION OF COSIMO, PIERO,
LORENZO DE' MEDICIS
1434-1492

Palmer's
Dommed
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556047
2.1.53

METHUEN & CO.
36 ESSEX STREET, W.C.
LONDON

1892

*Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.
At the Ballantyne Press*

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HISTORY OF FLORENCE.

BOOK I.

THE DOMINATION OF COSIMO DE' MEDICIS.

CHAPTER I.

ESTABLISHMENT OF COSIMO'S POWER BY FOREIGN POLICY AND WAR.

1435-1441.

Foreign policy of Cosimo—His alliance with Francesco Sforza—The league with Venice renewed—Sforza captain-general (June 1435)—Hostilities of Sforza in the States of the Church and of Fortebracci in Tuscany—Peace of Ferrara (August 20)—Florence engaged in the war for the succession of Naples—Help sent to the Genoese against Milan—Consecration of S. M. del Fiore by Eugene IV. (March 25, 1436)—He leaves Florence—Intrigues of Rinaldo des Albizzi with the Duke of Milan—Piccinino, on the frontier of Lucca—He is beaten by Sforza and Neri Capponi (February 8, 1437)—New enterprise for the conquest of Lucca—Sforza called into Lombardy by the Venetians (October)—Embassy of Cosimo in Venice (April 1438)—Truce of three years (April 28)—Underhand manœuvres of Filippo-Maria and of Piccinino—Sforza in the pay of Venice and Florence (February 19, 1439)—Embassy of Neri Capponi in Venice—Campaign of Sforza in Lombardy—The war brought into Tuscany (February 7, 1440)—Sforza engaged by the Venetians—Success of Piccinino round Florence (April)—Agitation in Florence—Neri Capponi beats back the enemy—Piccinino called into the Casentino by the Count of Poppi—Battle of Anghiari (June 29)—Defeat and retreat of Piccinino—Consequence of victory—Fresh persecutions of the exiled—Fate of Rinaldo des Albizzi and his family—Expulsion of the Count of Poppi (July 31)—Campaigns of Lombardy (1440-1441)—Exactions of Piccinino—Marriage of Sforza (October 24)—Peace of Cavriana (November 20).

RECALLED from exile by his countrymen,¹ brought back in triumph, Cosimo de' Medicis can no longer be regarded as a simple citizen. This upstart merchant reigned over Florence, so

¹ See *Histoire de Florence depuis ses origines jusqu'à la domination des Médicis*, vol. vi. book xii. c. 3, 4. Paris, 1883.

to say, but we must also admit that he reigned solely by force of opinion. He would not have stood his ground twenty-four hours if he had not represented a great party—those conquered by the democracy, the victims of the oligarchy. His return for them was a long-desired vengeance, and their satisfaction was his strength. It was by means of their faithful and interested support that he was able to establish his power, proscribe his principal enemies, and attach the rest to himself, transform the power of influence into the power of authority and action, and Florentine instability, that secular plague, into stability.

This was certainly not the work of a day. The slow progress of this hypocritical encroachment alone explains the error of some of our contemporaries regarding the rôle of Cosimo. Rarely seeing his name upon documents, they are persuaded, and would fain persuade us too, that nothing was changed in Florence; that there was but one Florentine the more; that the establishment of monarchical power was of later date, when Piero, Cosimo's son, rid himself by exile of the chief hangers-on of the oligarchical factions, that is, in 1466.¹ But they mistake appearance for reality; they forget the precedents of history. Cosimo has often been compared to Octavius Augustus, and, all proportions preserved, there are many points of resemblance between them; there is none more apparent than this prudent and progressive seizure of possession. In Florence under Cosimo, as in Rome under Augustus, the Republic practically ceased to exist, although these two patient usurpers feigned to respect the forms, manœuvring for and obtaining the functions. From his palace, where he kept himself aloof, Cosimo governed with no less mastery than Augustus had done, than Maso des Albizzi did before him; and between him and this last named there is this great

¹ This is the opinion of M. Pellegrini. On the contrary, M. Villari thinks, as we do, that Cosimo was absolute master, preserving the appearance of a simple individual. See *Niccolò Machiavelli e i suoi tempi*, vol. i. p. 44-45. Flor., 1877-82.

difference, that, Maso dead, his son Rinaldo, although capable, is disputed recognition as virtual chief of the town, whereas upon Cosimo's death, his heir, Piero, though incapable and impotent, is recognised as his successor almost without contest.

This progress supposes a slow and underhand work; that we must not deny, even when at the start we do not grasp, day by day, in detail, the results. To cry "Thief!" the Florentines waited until the thief was their master. They were not experienced in usurpations and in usurpers. But the fact is saliently evident even in the silence of documents. The old history is for once right, and not the new. It is the first impression that is good, and we must know how to hold to it.

Thanks to the satisfied revenge of the insignificant, Cosimo seized the place that Rinaldo had not been able to take, though it had been prepared for him by his father. But he knew too well how fleeting is the kindness of the gods not to procure his citizens other sources of contentment. His rare sagacity penetrated that which was unseen by others, the spirit of the wearied Florentines, leaning to peaceful servitude rather than agitated freedom, which disposed them unconsciously to subjection. In order to turn them from politics, he impelled them towards trade and industry, towards letters and art. To succeed, violence was not necessary on his side nor on theirs. They willingly called him the "great merchant!"¹ For centuries the sacrifice of lucrative work to ruinous wars was painful to Florence. A taste for arts and letters was at this time spread over Tuscany and all Italy. To increase and protect it, to encourage the growth of work and the development of wealth, were good means of government. There were others less edifying in the public career of this far-seeing politician, but we must not overload him with blame, nor forget that in the fifteenth century—century of adventurers and bastards²—the curtain of

¹ Luca Landucci, *Diario fiorentino dal 1450 al 1516*, published and annotated by M. Jodoco del Badia, Flor., 1883, p. 3.

² According to Borso d'Este in Ferrara, Sigismondo Malatesta in Rimini, Francesco Sforza in Milan, Ferrante of Aragon in Naples, and many others.

honour, to quote Gonsalvo of Cordova, was loosely woven; that already the revolting theory of success, whose laws Machiavelli later set down, was wide-spread and deeply planted, and that at this hour of history it was almost a virtue to replace violence by cunning, and cynicism by hypocrisy.¹

Saluted upon his return with universal applause, Cosimo could count upon peace in Florence; but would he enjoy outside such peace as was necessary to the establishment of his power? Neither the future nor even the present was sparing of threat. Until then, he had only found friends among the foreign nobles; but was not their friendship for an exile another form of enmity for the Republic? Would they not welcome the fresh exiles, aid them in their devices, lend themselves to any league, to any warlike design? And in this event the "great merchant" would hardly be their open foe. He had about as little of the military instinct and the taste for fighting as his ancestors and the rest of his countrymen—an hereditary and henceforth incurable evil. Thus Florence was obliged to hire a *condottiere*, and Cosimo cast his eyes upon Francesco Sforza.²

He might have chosen worse. Born at San Miniato *al Tedesco*, upon Florentine territory, of a woman of the country,³ Sforza was not altogether a stranger. Tuscany was proud of this celebrated half-Tuscan. Although a bastard, at twenty-three he had replaced his father in the command of his army, and was recognised by all the captains;⁴ then, at the age of thirty-five, he had married Bianca, the illegitimate daughter of the Duke of Milan, Filippo Maria, and sole heiress,⁵ a mere child, twenty-four years younger than he. Strong, brave upon

¹ Leo is too favourable to Cosimo and Sismondi too hostile. The one, a true Teuton, delights in the spectacle of growing Cesarism; the other cannot forgive the conqueror an aristocracy where he saw liberty, and fails to distinguish in him the good from the evil.

² Fabroni, *Magni Cosmi Medicei vita*, p. 53.

³ July 23, 1401. His mother was called Lucia Frezzania.

⁴ Bonincontri, xxi. 82; Simoneta, xxi. 188, 202.

⁵ Litta, *Famiglie italiane*. Visconti Family.

necessity, capable of fixed ideas and turned to evil by interest or by hate,¹ he inspired distrust and forced others to reckon with him.²

Filippo Maria seized countless pretexts to escape the fulfilment of his promise,³ and it became necessary for Sforza to compel him to keep it. He was strong in his resources. In his army lay the hope of his independence, but he needed money to support it. Money was not difficult to find. Venice and Florence were rich enough to pay their servants, but they were hand-in-glove with the Pope, Eugene IV., whom Sforza suspected of a design to poison him,⁴ and whom he defied by dating his letters *ex Girifalco nostro Firmiano, invito Petro et Paulo*.⁵ It was a hard and uncertain step to make overtures to him; however, if he refused, he had only to turn to the adventurers Bracceschi, who were unalterably devoted to the Visconti, whom he wished to intimidate and reduce to their proper limits.⁶ There was no longer any doubt: like Cosimo, Sforza desired equilibrium in Italy, and at least provisional peace. It was impossible for them to escape a mutual understanding.

Peace by equilibrium was a policy. How much more serious even than that which from the year 1428 strove to unite all the states of Italy in a single league, forcing upon them the imaginary obligation of punishing whichever of the contractors broke his word?⁷ Cosimo's views were more practical, if less broad. He shut his eyes upon the devices of one portion of his enemies to gather all his efforts to one point, and, if

¹ Ricotti, iii. 103, 104.

² Cavalcanti speaks of his shameful actions, calls him wicked robber, mad and bestial, but more of a felon than a madman (*Seconda Storia*, c. 18, 19, ii. 170-172, 202).

³ M. Ant. Sabellico, *Rerum Venetiarum, Dec. III.*, book iii. f. 589. Venice, 1718.

⁴ The project of poisoning was known through Baldassare d'Offida, who was in the Pope's service. Was the Pope concerned in it? One cannot say. See Simoneta, book iv. xxi. 255, 256.

⁵ All authors report this bravada. See Machiavelli, *Ist. Fior.*, book v. p. 67 A.

⁶ Ricotti, iii. 51, 52; Sismondi, vi. 31.

⁷ December 9, 1428. Osio, *Doc. diplom.*, ii. 269, and Cipolla, p. 346.

necessary, march towards peace through war. He was on friendly relations with Sienna, a disturbing neighbour, easily made dangerous.¹ He desired to get on well with Venice, and instructed Neri Capponi to renew with her for ten years the alliance, less cordial since the defeat of Imola.² Then, in June 1435, he named the "Count Francesco" captain-general; for so Sforza was called since he became Gonfalonier of the Church and Lord of the Marches.³

Arms were taken up against Milan, and a march was made upon the environs of Rome, to clear them of the "devil Fortebracci," chief of the Bracceschi, who infested them.⁴ It was an exaction of Eugene IV.; and since he was refused the pardon of Rinaldo and the rest of the defeated still in Florence, this concession was necessary to soothe his temper and merit his friendship. Besides, what did it matter how the war began? Filippo Maria could not abandon Fortebracci, beaten off Roman territory and besieged in Assisi; he helped him in forsaking Piccinino in Tuscany, a diversion which at once brought back Sforza. At a blow, Sforza's brother, Alexander, was beaten, taken prisoner by Fortebracci, once more free to move; but the terrible Count Francesco, the sole and real Sforza, flew to his rescue. Defeated in turn, killed in the fray, the chief of the Bracceschi, by his death, was the ruin of the cause his redoubtable arm had sustained.⁵ This was the end of the two months' war.

On the 20th August, peace was definitely concluded at Ferrara, but upon a base no less fragile than in 1428: each recovered what had been lost, and the confederates contracted the platonic engagement to march hand-in-hand against perjury.⁶ They foresaw so well their approaching disunion, that

¹ See G. Capponi (Append. ii. 505), three letters addressed to Neri Capponi.

² See our *Hist.*, vol. vi. book xii. c. 4, p. 485.

³ Boninsegni, p. 62; Fabroni, p. 52; Ammirato, xxi. 2, 3.

⁴ Boninsegni, p. 63.

⁵ Boninsegni, p. 62, 63; Machiavelli, v. 68 A; Ricotti, iii. 59.

⁶ Boninsegni, p. 62; Ammirato, xxi. 3; Machiavelli (v. 68 A) was mistaken about the date; he places these events during Cosimo's exile.

defiance showed itself in the very instrument of peace. "No one can," it said, "declare war alone, because others will be dragged into it." Venice exacted this clause: she distrusted these ephemeral Signories of Florence, that could, every second month, inaugurate a new policy.¹ Though it was usually far-seeing enough, nothing warned the Council of Ten that, under this apparent mobility, Cosimo was introducing a government more stable because it was more personal.

But it did not suffice to will in order to direct events. Like everything else, the most personal government is subject to the law of circumstances. Cosimo needed peace to strengthen himself; and hardly was it established in the north than he saw it threatened in the south. No less versatile than Filippo Maria, old Queen Joan of Naples had successively named as her heirs Alphonsus of Aragon, Louis of Anjou, then, instead of this last, after his death without children in 1434, his brother René, Count of Provence.² When, in turn, her own death came (February 11, 1435), her fantastic testaments gave a chief to the two parties into which her kingdom was divided; the people declared for René, the barons proclaimed Alphonsus. These latter held the trumps in their hands. Alphonsus was in Sicily, within call, and, descendant of Constance, daughter of Manfred, his title seemed older even than that of the first house of Anjou.³ With a large fleet he hurried to lay siege to Gaëta; but he was beaten by the Genoese (August 5, 1435),⁴ who, ever menaced at home, held to the freedom of

¹ Letter of the Signory to Neri Capponi, who remained in Venice as ambassador after the league was concluded, April 1, 1435, in G. Capponi, ii. 6, n. 2.

² See in Giannone (book xxv. c. 6, p. 336) the final testament giving the succession to René. Cf. Lecoy de la Marche, *Le Roi René*, vol. i. p. 112, Paris, 1875; H. Martin, vol. v. p. 307; Sismondi, vol. vi. p. 8.

³ See Sismondi on these reciprocal rights, vi. 6-9.

⁴ Cavalcanti (book xi. c. 3, 4; vol. ii. p. 4-10) gives the names of the prisoners, the vessels taken, and of those who bought them. On these events see Stella, xvii. 1316; Bracelli, *De bello hispanico*, book iii. G. 3 vº, Hagueneau, 1530 (the pages of this book are numbered below as follows: A, A ii., A iii., B., &c.); P. Bizari, *Senatus populi que genuensis historia*, book xi. p. 246-248, Antwerp, 1579; Barth. Facio, *De rebus gestis ab Alphonso Iº.*, l. iv. p. 49-61, in Burmann, *Thes.*

this fine and secure port as an anchorage and a depository for their merchandise. This unforeseen victory, big with consequences, did not, as in the communal period, permit the Florentines to shut themselves up in their customary isolation, in their beloved neutrality.

The Duke of Milan, the "protector" of the Genoese, only permitted them to rush into war, foreseeing their certain defeat.¹ Vexed by a victory that rendered his oppression more difficult, he prevented the conquerors from announcing their triumph to Europe. Upon the vanquished king, conducted like the other prisoners to Milan, he lavished every mark of affection, and listened complaisantly to his advice. Alphonsus, so superior by his chivalrous character and his cultivated mind² to his contemporaries that he was called the Magnanimous, pointed out without difficulty the faults of his policy: to lower the house of Aragon was to raise that of Anjou, which Milan as well as Naples desired, and which was a closer neighbour.³ Recognising his error, Filippo Maria went so far as to order the Genoese to make restitution of the captured vessels, to lead back their prisoner to the scene of his defeat, and henceforth engage to fight upon his side.⁴ But this was straining the cord. The only advantage to the Duke was a revolt; Genoa recovered her liberty on the 24th or 27th December 1435.⁵

To defend herself against her perfidious protector, she implored assistance, and sent one of her citizens, the historian Bracelli, to Florence to solicit that of the Florentines and of

antiq. ital., vol. ix. part 3; *Giornali napoletani*, xxi. 1100; Simoneta, l. 2, xxi. 244; Boninsegni, p. 62; Monstrelet, ed. of *Panth. litt.*, c. 185, p. 702; Mariana, *Historia general de España*, vol. ii. p. 428, Madrid, 1848; Giannone, l. xxv. c. 7, p. 338; Sismondi, vi. 6-12; Cipolla, p. 400.

¹ *Giornali napoletani*, xxi. 1100.

² See Folieta, l. x. p. 215; Facio, l. iv. p. 53, 54.

³ Folieta, l. x. p. 219 v°; Simoneta, l. 3, xxi. 245; Bracelli, l. iv. H 4 v°; Bizari, l. xi. p. 249; Machiavelli, v. 69 A; Mariana, l. xxi. c. 10, vol. ii. p. 429; Sismondi, vi. 15-17.

⁴ Bracelli, l. iv. 1, 2; Machiavelli, v. 69 B, 70 A; Sismondi, vi. 18.

⁵ Cavalcanti, l. xi. c. 6, vol. ii. p. 12; Folieta, l. x. p. 221; Ammirato, xxi. 4.

Eugene IV. The temptation was great, for all that weakened Milan was to the profit of her rivals; but the league was an obstacle, for it united to the Duke the great Republics and the Pope. But we know how much treaties weigh in the balance against roused passions and interests. Not to break his word, Eugene abstained from lending succour, but he did not prevent the Florentines from furnishing theirs, on the condition that there was no fighting.¹ Under the conduct of one Baldaccio d'Anghiari, destined to a tragic celebrity, wheat, horses, and men were sent to Genoa. But Florence was vexed that her sacred guest should restrain her freedom of action; and as he had already made himself obnoxious to Cosimo by his protest against the banishment of Rinaldo, everybody was against him. He was accused of wishing to annex the town that offered him hospitality to the States of the Church.² His departure was thus hailed as a relief. As the perfidy of his legate at Bologna had made him master of that town, he went there to live,³ October 6, 1435.

Desired by both parties, the separation was accomplished with an outward show of respect and good feeling. On the day of the Annunciation, the 25th March 1436, which was the first day of the year for the Florentines, Eugene IV. consecrated the reconstructed cathedral, the old Santa Reparata or Liberata, under its new name of Santa Maria del Fiore, beautified by the bold cupola of Brunelleschi. To avoid a too narrow passage for the Pope from Santa Maria Novella to Santa Maria del Fiore, instead of a line of armed men, a path of wooden planks two fathoms above the ground was constructed. The path was covered with foliage, rich stuffs, and

¹ Embassy of Neri Capponi at Genoa. MS. of the library of G. Capponi, quoted in his *Stor. di Fir.*, vol. ii. 8, n. 2; Cavalcanti, l. xi. c. 7, ii. p. 14.

² Neri Capponi, xviii. 1183.

³ This legate granted peace to all the emigrants from Bologna and Bentivoglio exiled for fifteen years, who returned upon the faith of these words. Without being accused of any crime, without confession, he was beheaded, and he was not even allowed Christian burial. See Burselli, *Ann. Bonon.*, xxiii. 876; *Cron. Bol.*, xviii. 655 (and 526 on the facts of Bologna); Ammirato, xxi. 6.

handsome tapestries, and the Pope traversed it followed by seven cardinals, thirty-seven archbishops and bishops, many ambassadors, and nine members of the Signory. From the altar steps he blessed the building, then Cardinal Orsini, in official robes, mounted the ladders to sprinkle the walls with holy water. The ceremony lasted five hours. Upon the return, the Gonfalonier of Justice, Davanzati, served the Pope as train-bearer, and his reward was the belt of chivalry. A banquet given to the foreign ambassadors terminated the proceedings.¹ Florence forgave the Father of the Faithful; he had amused her for an instant.

Cosimo rejoiced a while in elbow-room and time to turn his attention to Milan. Thence, in fact, blew the wind of war. The Duke naturally wished to punish the allies of the rebel Genoese. Beside him stood the fiery Rinaldo, who, at the risk of his life, had defied his sentence of banishment.² More than one of his friends had paid as heavily for the like disobedience. But his risk was slight if he kept out of the territory of Florence's allies. He was in security at Milan. To the Visconti, once the object of his hatred and now of his hope, he proved that the Florentines, having recognised him as the protector of Genoa, should not have prevented him from subduing it; that Cosimo alone was capable of such a want of good faith; that he had subdued, impoverished, divided, and irritated his countrymen, who now only longed for a liberator.³ We readily believe what it suits us to believe, and the proof that Rinaldo was sincere in his confidence lay in the fact that he cast bravadoes broadcast. "The hen is hatching," was the threat he had carried to his fortunate rival. Cosimo replied, wittily and sensibly, "The hen cannot hatch out of her nest,"⁴

¹ Cambi, *Del.*, xx. 208; Boninsegni, p. 64; Rinuccini, p. 71; Machiavelli, v. 74 A; Ammirato, xxi. 5; Cesare Guasti, *La Cupola di S. M. del Fiore*, p. 9, 37, 89, Flor., 1857; C. J. Cavallucci, *S. M. del Fiore, storia documentata dall' origine fino ai nostri giorni*, Flor., 1881.

² See our *Hist.*, vol. vi. p. 511.

³ Machiavelli, v. 70; he gives Rinaldo's speech. Ammirato, xxi. 6.

⁴ Ammirato, xxi. 6.

but he had his doubts, and he feared the exceptions. An artificial nest is everything, and Milan was certainly one.¹

Thus it was that, on account of the Genoese, war broke out again, not openly nor quickly. Niccolò Piccinino, condottiere in the Duke's pay, when beaten by their town,² turned his hostile attentions towards their possessions; now engaged with Pietra Santa, which the people of Lucca had made over to Florence as a pledge for a loan,³ now with Sarzana, which he attacked upon the pretext of opening the road to Naples. The year 1436 passed before his army fronted Florence. In threatening Vico Pisano and Barga, he declared himself to be acting in his own name, and not as captain of Milan.⁴ But how believe his word once he was in Lucca, however willing one might be to feign credulity before? Feared as much as admired,⁵ he might, upon a two days' march, be upon Florence. Neri Capponi rushed to Pisa with every available force,⁶ but his military talents were useless here. Against any other adversary they might have sufficed, but only Sforza could inspire confidence against Piccinino.

At this time Francesco Sforza happened to be in Florence, where Cosimo hastened to do him every honour with jousts upon the square of Santa Croce and public balls in the place of the Signory. Only, having made his choice between the two leagues, he belonged to the Pope's service, and the Pope,

¹ It is curious to note that Gino Capponi, so honest elsewhere, is here so partial to the aristocratic party represented by Rinaldo, that he passes these intrigues in silence. See *Stor. di Fir.*, ii. 8, 9.

² Folieta, l. x. p. 222 r^o; Bracelli, l. iv. K 2; Machiavelli, v. 70 B.

³ Neri Capponi, xviii. 1184; Cavalcanti, l. xi. c. 8, 9, vol. ii. p. 15, 17.

⁴ Neri Capponi, xviii. 1185; Cavalcanti, l. xi. c. 9, vol. ii. p. 18; Poggio, l. 7, xx. 385; Machiavelli, v. 71 A; Ammirato, xxi. 7.

⁵ Neri Capponi, xviii. 1185; Machiavelli, v. 71 A.

⁶ "Richorda che Nic. Piccinino consumò tutto il verno passato in Lunigiana e a Pontriemoli, stando sempre a campo nelle nevi, e vivendo di castagne (Agnolo Pandolfini à Averardo, 18 Oct. 1431). Nic. Piccinino, l'anno passato, di verno e senza danari sempre stette in hopera, et in uno punto quando bisognò andò da staggia Arezzo, et chosì poi di subito d'Arezzo in Lombardia. Et perchè potresti dire de' suoi pari ce sono pochi" (Cosimo à Averardo, Oct. 3, 1431. See these texts in the *Doc. Pellegrini*, Append. Nos. 76, 81).

disliking war, refused to yield him. At length Eugene did yield him, when he lost all hope of obtaining pardon for having endeavoured to poison Sforza by throwing all the responsibility upon one of his dead advisers.¹ Besides which, he had to submit to the condition of not sending his condottiere into Lombardy.² Then Count Francesco started for Pisa, carrying the commander's baton. He was expressly ordered to hold himself upon the defensive, and not to accept battle. This prudence pleased Sforza; he did not wish to lose the Marches; but it suited the Florentines less. Not being in the confidence of the gods, and ignoring the conditions and repugnances of the Pope, they gave vent to carping criticisms: if the famous condottiere shrank from an encounter, he must either be afraid or entangled in some unworthy marriage.³

Among the exiles in Piccinino's camp the disappointment was as great. Face to face, animated by their traditional hate, *Sforzeschi* and *Bracceschi* seemed to waste themselves in futile skirmishes, too feeble to break the Pope's negotiations with Milan.⁴ Happily Piccinino was a mighty jouster. With him this state of affairs could not last very long. This son of a Perugian butcher, brought up to the wool trade, not of a calculating turn of mind, had become Braccio's favourite pupil, and even his nephew by marriage, after having killed his first wife upon suspicion, and afterwards recognised the child of the supposed adultery.⁵ Sleeping scarcely three hours upon the ground and without removing his arms, he was the most audacious and alert of the condottieri Italy had till then seen, the most fertile in expedients, and the cleverest in repairing his reverses, and the only one who, after defeat, could terrorise his conquerors. Many vicissitudes had embittered him. He spoke badly and with difficulty, and was

¹ Simoneta, l. 20, xxi. 255, 256. (See above, p. 5.)

² G. Capponi, ii. 9.

³ Cavalcanti, l. xi. c. 9, vol. ii. pp. 17-19.

⁴ Boninsegni, p. 65; Neri Capponi, xviii. 1185.

⁵ This child was Jacopo Piccinino, who attained great renown.

taciturn and double-faced. Little, as his name indicates, feeble and sickly, lame and paralysed later, it was necessary to lift him into the saddle. After his most splendid sallies he was obliged to stop for breath. The lightest armour was too heavy for him, and he ended by fighting without any, upon which he was spared; but driven to fury by his own weakness, he was not grateful even for this. Hard towards every one, he would make targets of the traitors who fell into his hands.¹

To the great joy of the exiles, he took the offensive towards the end of December. After a futile sally upon Vico Pisano,² he laid siege to Barga, the key of the mountain of Pistoia and the valley of Nievole, the loss of which might involve that of Florentine Liguria.³ Neri Capponi and Francesco Sforza received orders to sustain the struggle seriously, without regard for the subjects of Lucca or of Milan. With three thousand men they beat Piccinino, and compelled him to raise the siege on the 8th February 1437.⁴ His safety was perhaps a disaster, for Venice, by strong-armed demonstration, forced Filippo Maria to recall him northward.⁵

Lucca was thus without defence, and exposed to old envies, which were revived by a natural thirst of vengeance against her people, and further excited by Piccinino. For this long-wished-for satisfaction Florence counted upon Cosimo, and at the start Cosimo could not withdraw. If he wished to reign, he must

¹ Pietro Candido Decembrio, *Vita di Nic. Piccinino*, R. I. S., xx. 1051-84, a declamatory work in the form of a discourse; G. B. Poggio, *Historie et vite di Braccio Fortebracci detto da Montone et di Niccolò Piccinino perugini*, Venice, 1572, p. 144-164, the text is in Latin. The preceding title is that of the Italian translation by Pompeo Pellini of Perouse. G. B. Poggio was one of the sons of Poggio Bracciolini, who continued Leon. Bruni, and whose history is in the 20th volume of Muratori. Cf. Ricotti, iii. 7, 102; Sismondi, vi. 119.

² Cavalcanti, l. xi. c. 9, vol. ii. p. 18.

³ Neri Capponi, xviii. 1185; Boninsegni, p. 65; Crist. da Soldo, *Ist. Bresc.*, xxi. 831; Machiavelli, v. 71 A; Ricotti, iii. 65.

⁴ Neri Capponi, xviii. 1185; Cavalcanti, l. xi. c. 10, vol. ii. p. 20; Simoneta l. 4, xxi. 258; Bonincontri, xxi. 146; Boninsegni, p. 66; Machiavelli, v. 71 A; Ammirato, xxi. 8.

⁵ Cavalcanti, l. xi. c. 11, vol. ii. p. 21; Poggio, l. 7, xx. 387; Simoneta, l. 4, xxi. 261; Sabellico, l. ii. f. 555.

please. He quite understood that Venice would look askance upon this conquest,¹ but the oligarchy that he replaced having given Pisa to Florence, he could not do less than give her Lucca, a town of less importance, no doubt, but a strategical post and the capital of the smiling garden of Italy. By this means he would strengthen his position by glory, and through a distribution of numerous offices and fertile lands content his partisans, procure himself new ones, and put an end to the extravagance of his economical country, prodigal enough in public loans as long as Lucca was in question, but willing to welcome the day when she should be able to stop her prodigalities.²

To begin with, the much-used tactics of *guasto* were revived. This showed a want of imagination. "Let it be given at once," wrote the Ten to Neri Capponi, emissary at Lucca; and this was the unanimous cry. "If this could not be, we should be stoned. The best guarantee we can have from Lucca, if her people agree with us, is their necessity for finding food through us."³ The machiavellism of the object lent freshness to the ancient means. Sforza obeyed (April 26), not without retaking upon occasion the places that Florence and Genoa had lost;⁴ but Lucca held her own behind her strong walls, appearing to forget her vines, her cut wheat, and her cattle carried off. "With these people of Lucca," wrote again the Ten in the following month of July, "there is no hope of agreement; they hold out more firmly than before the loss of their *contado*."⁵ The Florentines were forced to abandon their arms,⁶ but they did not lower

¹ Ammirato, xxi. 9.

² Letter from the Ten to Neri Capponi, emissary at Lucca, April 1, 1437, quoted by G. Capponi, ii. 10, n. 1. Capponi here makes excellent use of his domestic records.

³ Other letters from the same to the same, *ibid.*, n. 3.

⁴ See the names with the dates in Boninsegni, p. 66. Cf. Ammirato, xxi. 9.

⁵ Text in G. Capponi, ii. 10, n. 3.

⁶ Neri Capponi, xviii. 1186; Poggio, l. 7, xx. 386; L. Bruni, xix. 938; Cavalcanti, l. xi. c. 12, vol. ii. p. 23; Machiavelli, v. 71 B, 72.

their cynical ambition, and it was one of their sons, Machiavelli, who stamps it in a phrase in which simplicity accentuates energy: "Rarely has any one felt more displeased in losing his property than the Florentines felt in not having acquired that of another."¹

But the only soldier for this campaign was Sforza, and Venice called loudly upon him. She had lately lost two captains in her pay, Gattamelata, struck down by apoplexy,² and the Marquis of Mantua, won over by Milanese gold.³ It was a complete negotiation. "The war of Lombardy is the essential," said the Council of Ten; "upon it depends the conquest of Lucca, the liberty of Florence, even that of all Italy. Together the two Republics can hardly hold the Duke; what will Florence do alone when once Venice is vanquished?" The argument had weight, but it concealed the cards beneath without deceiving the Florentines. According to Cavalcanti, what so infuriated the people of Lucca, "till a mother could have eaten her son, the husband his wife, rather than submit," was the encouragement of Venice.⁴ It needed nothing more to compromise the alliance. "The two allies," he continues, "dreaded a tyrant less than a republic, because he does not last so long."⁵ What indeed could Venice do with a captain too jealous to preserve his beloved Marches, too wishful to obtain the hand of Bianca to show much zeal in his fight with her father?⁶ It was to weaken Florence that they wanted him above all. Cosimo could refuse to allow him to go to them, for the clauses of his engagement with the league released him from crossing the Po; but the refusal might break the league and interrupt the war; Florence's freedom of action with Lucca depended upon a sharp encounter between Venice and Milan.

¹ Machiavelli, v. 73 B.

² Sanuto, xxii. 1063; *Ist. Bresc.*, xxi. 798; Sabellico, l. ii. f. 555; Cavalcanti, l. xii. c. 1, vol. ii. p. 33; Neri Capponi, xviii. 1191; Simoneta, xxi. 286.

³ *Ist. Bresc.*, xxi. 797; Sanuto, xxii. 1062.

⁴ Cavalcanti, l. xi. c. 13, vol. ii. p. 25.

⁵ Cavalcanti, l. xii. c. 1, vol. ii. p. 34.

⁶ Letter from the Ten to Neri Capponi in G. Capponi, ii. 11, note.

So Florence was forced to yield her condottiere, and in October Sforza met at Reggio the Venetian ambassador, Andrea Morosini, who ordered him to fight openly, with the alternative of losing his command and his pay.¹ As the proverb says, "We do not catch flies with vinegar," the wily peasant stuck more closely to Cosimo;² he even went back to Tuscany,³ to the great annoyance of the Venetians and the mutual satisfaction of Cosimo and Filippo Maria.

Already the enemy of Milan, Florence was now on the point of war with Venice. To avoid this grave danger, the "great merchant" went thither as ambassador in April 1438. He counted upon the friendships of exile to obtain from the Venetians that an understanding between Sforza and the Duke should be prevented, and that they should look with friendly eyes upon a new enterprise with Lucca. "Our senate," the Doge Foscari coldly replied, "knows its own strength and that of the other Italian states. It is not in the habit of paying those who do not serve it. Venice does not wish to advance Count Francesco at her own expense. As for Lucca, Florence is free to follow her wishes; we do not understand the motive of her overtures upon this subject." Beyond these reticent phrases, Cosimo obtained nothing, and this explains his coldness towards the Republic of the Lagoons,⁴ a principal fact in his history. It was thought that where he had failed,

¹ See Sabellico on the defiance of Venice by Sforza, l. ii. p. 557.

² "Che la decta signoria faza quella propria stima de luy che faria el figliolo verso el padre quando fosse in pericolo. Dicendo che se Sforza fosse vivo et fosse assediato da Brazo et quella signoria fosse in pericolo del stato suo, lasseria pericolare el padre per aydare la decta signoria" (Sforza's letter, Oct. 12, 1437). "Ogni mia volontà remetto in vuy. . . . Ben ve prego che al facto vostro vogliate havere buona advertentia, perchè non potete havere el vostro, che non habiate el mio" (Sforza to Lorenzo de Medicis, March 6, 1438). These extracts have been published by M. B. Buser, *Die Beziehungen der Mediceer zu Frankreich während der Jahre 1434-1494, in ihrem Zusammenhang mit den allgemeinen Verhältnissen Italiens*, Leipzig, 1879, p. 351. Such is Sforza's language for many years. We will see it further on in several documents.

³ Simoneta, xxi. 266; Neri Capponi, xviii. 1186; Ammirato, xxi. 10.

⁴ Neri Capponi, xviii. 1186; Boninsegni, p. 67; Sabellico, l. ii. p. 558; Machiavelli, v. 73; Ammirato, xxi. 11.

Giuliano Davanzati, more eloquent and a friend of the Pope,¹ would succeed; but this illusion did not last long. As an added disgrace, Florence was soon abandoned by her other allies. Genoa, asked for assistance, replied in vague terms,² in return for help recently accorded her.³ Betrayed by his lieutenants, flattered by Filippo Maria, persuaded that "it is wiser to sheer the wool than tear off the skin,"⁴ Sforza came to a formal understanding which once more assured him the hand of Bianca when she reached a marriageable age, and he promised to obtain peace.

Thus the Florentines were completely abandoned. They were surrounded by enemies ready to turn upon them. Nobody wanted them to become masters of Lucca.⁵ Ruined by taxes, exhausted by famine, cut down by an epidemic,⁶ how could they expect to hold out? To spare their pride, a truce of three years was proposed,⁷ and, while exacting that the siege of Lucca should be raised, they were left their conquests, and by this means unfortunate Lucca was reduced to a territory of six miles outside her walls. These conditions were satisfactory, and accordingly were accepted (April 28). But for the Florentines, it was a mortal blow to see them rendered valueless by the action of their friend Sforza, who, on his own authority, made restitution to Lucca of all she had lost, except Montecarlo, Uzzano, and the port of Motrone.⁸

Writers are astounded by this kind of treason; they ignore its motive. And yet it is not difficult to discover it; *is fecit cui*

¹ Ammirato, xxi. 12.

² Boninsegni, p. 67.

³ See above, same chapter, p. 9.

⁴ Cavalcanti, l. xi. c. 17, vol. ii. p. 30.

⁵ Letter reported in *Cron. d'Agobbio*, xxi. 975.

⁶ Boninsegni, p. 67.

⁷ Neri Capponi, xviii. 1187; Cavalcanti, l. xi. c. 17, vol. ii. p. 30. However, L. Bruni uses the word "peace" (*Comm.*, xix. 939).

⁸ L. Bruni, *Comment.*, xix. 939; Boninsegni, p. 67; Sabellico, l. ii. f. 561; Beverini in Cavalcanti, l. xi. c. 17, vol. ii. p. 31, n. 2; *Cron. d'Agobbio*, xxi. 975; Simoneta, xxi. 265; Poggio, xx. 390; Platina, xx. 814; Bonincontri, xxi. 147; Machiavelli, v. 73 B; Ammirato, xxi. 13.

prodest. From all times the Visconti wished to see Lucca free and strong against Florence. Now, the wily condottiere already looked upon himself as the Duke of Milan.¹ Filippo Maria, abandoning the plan of a distant marriage, promised him Asti in Tortona as a dowry, and had advanced him 30,000 ducats; the trousseau and the gowns were ordered, invitations issued, and the persons who were to accompany the bride named.² At the same time, to keep Sforza away from the Venetians, the corrupting influence of whose gold he feared, he exaggerated the dangers of the step, and sent him, with Piccinino's son, to the far-off Abruzzi to defend one of his feudal states inherited from his father. Away from his future son-in-law, the Duke breathed more freely.³

This is only the first act of the comedy. The others which compose the play are much more complicated. Even without Sforza, the league still existed, and the Visconti wished to dissolve it. Here the principal part was played by his confidant, Piccinino. Feigning a jealous anger in the Duke's choice of a son-in-law, he retired and strengthened his position in Romagna, and offered to restore the Marches to the Pope; ⁴ and Eugene swallowed the bait. This Heaven-sent auxiliary received from him five thousand florins, the promise of feudal lands, the liberty of choosing to fight in the pay of the Church or of Venice. After the open rupture, who could have suspected Piccinino capable of secret enmity?

When the crafty partner had lulled both republican and pontifical prudence, his private emissaries swept the States of the Church, awakening old factions, and creating hope in the support of Milan; then in the middle of April he threw off the mask, and while his son was surprising Spoleta, he compelled Ostasio of Polenta, lord of Ravenna and ally of the

¹ Simoneta, xxi. 266; Ricotti, iii. 66.

² Neri Capponi, xviii. 1187.

³ Simoneta, xxi. 266; Ammirato, xxi. 14.

⁴ G. B. Poggio, *Vita di Nic. Piccinino*, p. 157.

Pope and of Venice, to recognise the Duke as protector.¹ Bologna soon rose (May 21), and twenty other towns followed her example. Meanwhile Filippo Maria feigned surprise, protesting ignorance of these revolts, and that they took place against his will; he swore by all the gods that Piccinino would pay the price with his head as soon as he could lay hands on him. Piccinino bowed to the storm and ordered his son to evacuate Spoleta; but when he saw that the powder had taken fire, he right-about-faced the Pope like a military Tartufe. "His Holiness," he said, "only accuses him in order to deprive him of the Duke's friendship, and in punishment his Holiness deserves to lose his estates."²

It would be idle to rail at perfidy in writing of the fifteenth century. If we cannot, like Machiavelli, praise the art of the players, at least we may recognise which of them plays the best. The advantage then belongs to the Visconti and his condottiere. Well conceived, the perfidious undertaking is well carried out. Piccinino, in covering the right bank of the Po with his soldiers, cut his enemies in two: the isolated Venetians on one side, open to attack; on the other, the Pope, Sforza, Florence, incapable of succouring them, all at a distance, and all estranged. Then, leaving his conquests to the care of his son, he flew to Lombardy; in the spring he was before Vicenza and Verona. Should these towns fall like Brescia, Venice could no longer hope to defend her provinces.

At all cost the Council of Ten must secure her allies. Giovanni Pisani was sent to Sforza, then returning by the Marches of Ancona, and Francesco Barbarigo went to Cosimo. The question was if they would succeed in re-forming the league, that the understandings of the 28th April, the three

¹ Sanuto, xxii. 1057; Sabellico, l. ii. f. 561; Simoneta, xxi. 271; Boninsegni, p. 68; G. B. Poggio, *Vita di Nic. Piccinino*, p. 158; Gir. Rossi, *Hist. Ravennatum*, l. vii. p. 626, Venice, 1589; Machiavelli, v. 74 B; Ammirato, xxi. 14.

² Sanuto, xxii. 1058; Machiavelli, v. 75 A; Ricotti, iii. 70; Sismondi, vi. 41; G. Capponi, ii. 15.

years truce between Florence and the Duke, had so nearly broken.¹

On the banks of the Arno, policy and calculation triumphed over rancour. We recognise the growing influence of the cold and steady Medici. Barbarigo's overtures were received in a very different way from the recent attitude of Venice. Florence undertook to engage the condottiere again for five years, with three hundred lances and as many foot-soldiers, supplying the half of their pay, 17,000 florins in gold a month, though she found this a heavy charge.² The *condotta* might even be prolonged a year upon the condition of giving Sforza notice four months in advance (February 19, 1439).³ The two Republics having the reputation of a full treasury, Pandolfo Malatesta, Pietro Orsini, the lords of Faenza and Ferrara, in turn offered their mercenary services. The Pope and the Genoese entered into this league armed to the teeth;⁴ truly Penelope's work, undone only to be done again at once.

One thing surprises us: Sforza, bound to Milan, breaks with his father-in-law. But Venice and Florence had touched the sore spot in persuading him that the Duke was only fooling him in the marriage question. They also gained him by gold, for he was needy and eager for money;⁵ they raised his pay on the 1st February. They had yet to persuade him to cross the Po at the risk of an offensive return of Piccinino into

¹ Sabellico, l. iii. f. 563; Machiavelli, v. 75 B; Ricotti, iii. 72; Sismondi, vi. 45.

² In all the records there are abundant proofs that Florence and Venice never agreed as to which should pay the biggest part of the pay. Take this passage: "Cum ei tum a Venetis, tum a Florentinis discordia duarum civitatum avare maligneque stipendia persolverentur."—*Platina*, xx. 814.

³ See the authentic document in the *Archivio Sforzesco*, Bibl. Nat. MS. Ital. No. 1583, f. 5. Neri Capponi (xviii. 1188) and Ammirato (xxi. 17) give 18th February as the date; *Ist. Bresc.* (xxi. 809), the 7th. According to Neri Capponi, the sum paid was not 17,000 florins, but 20,000, Venice paying 9000 and Florence 8400. Perhaps there was an addition. Other authors credit Venice with two-thirds of the expenses of armament, and Florence with only one.

⁴ Simoneta, xxi. 275; Poggio, xx. 400; Boninsegni, p. 69; Cavalcanti, l. xii. c. 2, vol. ii. p. 35; Machiavelli, v. 75 B, and the authors quoted in the preceding note.

⁵ Neri Capponi, xviii. 1188; Cavalcanti, l. xii. c. 5, vol. ii. p. 40.

Tuscany. He refused, fearing to leave his lands in the Marches unprotected; hence they sent Neri Capponi to him. "If Venice loses her states," said this subtle Florentine, "she will not be able to pay her share of the 17,000 florins, and Florence will not undertake to pay the whole."¹ This argument served to remove the scruples of the interested soldier, now that he was a lord. He allowed Neri Capponi to start for Venice and settle the route of the expedition.

Neri reports the details of the interview. He found the Venetian Signory, like the rest of the town, in mourning. He ventured upon discreet reproaches concerning their conduct to the Florentines, who, nevertheless, yielded them the Count Francesco, in spite of his usefulness in keeping Sienna and Lucca in order. Without waiting for the Doge to reply, according to custom, the lords stood up, lifted their hands, and tearfully thanked the Florentines and Neri himself in terms that prevented the modest narrator from reporting them in full.

The Venetian historians later gave a very different version of the meeting; the senate was noisy, it repulsed the league, it condemned Florentine ingratitude, it preferred the conditions of the Duke of Milan. But we may accept it that both sides exaggerated. Two merchant republics would not be likely to miss the occasion of making the best of their own side. We may remark upon the confession of the Venetian, that the senate, energetically exhorted by the Doge, ended by changing its mind,² and that the Venetian funds went up after the Florentine declaration.³

By this they were able to agree upon the route, and Sforza, outside the walls, marched off with his army. On the 20th

¹ The missives to Sforza of the ambassadors and his own letters, are full of unceasing and repulsive demands for money. We have only to glance at the *Archivio Sforzesco* to see it.

² Navagero, xxiii. 1104. This writer is of later date—1498. See Muratori's preface, p. 921.

³ Neri Capponi, xviii. 1189, whose account is followed by Machiavelli (v. 76) and Ammirato xxi. 17).

June he was upon Paduan ground.¹ He unfurled the flags of Venice, Florence, and Genoa, sent to him in sign of good feeling.² With rare decision, without any heat, Florence had shown the triumph of the policy of reason.

We need not follow the details of a war in which the Tuscan Republic played small part, except by money. The details are uninteresting; they belong to what we call petty warfare. The chiefs only risked their reputation, and the soldiers barely risked their lives; at the most, sixty men fell upon the field; their armour protected them, when in warm weather it did not smother them. The strife consisted of a few rapid marches to surprise the enemy or escape it, or to cover retreat by the sure protection of a river or a canal, the art of bridging a river under fire being as yet unknown. A glance served to count the forces, and the less numerous body regarded itself as defeated. The defeated were dispersed and despoiled, a simple matter for those who could gather themselves together the day after under a new master, or the same, at the expense of the lost or contested provinces and of their unfortunate inhabitants.³ Ammirato shows Piccinino surrounded by his enemies, escaping, as he remarks, after the fashion of impertinent lovers in comedy,⁴ in a sack upon the shoulder of a German soldier, who assumed quite naturally the rôle of plunderer. It was just because these operations were sterile that the war was brought back into Tuscany. Piccinino asked the Duke to send him there with the Florentine exiles. He wanted serious operations to mark out a principality like his rival, perhaps at his expense. He believed that such a brusque evolution would strike at the heart of the Medician republic, terrify

¹ Neri Capponi, xviii. 1190.

² Romanin, l. x. c. 7, vol. iv. p. 197, from Venetian documents.

³ Simoneta, xxi. 277; Sabellico, l. iv. p. 566; Sismondi, vi. 51; G. Capponi, ii. 16. On military operations see G. B. Poggio, *Vita di Nic. Picc.*, p. 158-164; Cavalcanti, l. xii. c. 6-10, vol. ii. p. 41-51. Morelli (*Del.*, xix. 170) indicates the principal.

⁴ Ammirato, xxi. 20, who took the facts from *Ist. Bresc.*, xxi. 815; Simoneta, xxi. 281; G. B. Poggio, *Vita di Nic. Picc.*, p. 163.

the Pope, and frighten off Sforza from Brescia. In isolating thus the Venetians, it would be possible to crush them, and then come back and attack the Count Francesco and crush him too,¹ a tactic old as the Horatii. The Doge understood the danger, and wished at all cost to retain the captain of the league. "To conquer in Lombardy is to conquer everywhere," he said. "Let the Count retreat, and Venice will lose her possessions by land."²

Already, with his natural confidence, Rinaldo de Albizzi saw himself back in his country. He asserted it loudly, and his friends chorussed him.³ The hen had hatched, and, as another bravada, he had it conveyed to Cosimo that the exiles were not asleep. "I believe it," said Cosimo; "I have robbed them of sleep."⁴ Events placed the laughers upon his side, but at the time they laughed with both. Rinaldo promised Filippo Maria a safe passage by the Casentino, where his friend the Count of Poppi reigned; then a revolt in Pistoia, which the Panciatichi, allies of his son, would provoke, and afterwards a rising in Prato and in Lucca. As well, at the approach of the smallest army, Florence, crushed with taxes, irritated by haughty rulers, trembling under oppression, would rise.⁵

We cannot doubt that there were malcontents in plenty, but this does not prove that the exiles were regretted or their return desired; for they certainly knew that Rinaldo and his friends would not lead them to liberty, and to return from the new aristocracy to the old did not offer sufficient advantages to justify a devastating and ruinous war, and perhaps capture by assault. There was everything to fear, for it was not likely that the prudent Filippo Maria or the crafty Piccinino would

¹ See Machiavelli, v. 78 B.

² Neri Capponi, xviii. 1192.

³ "Affirmantes se ipsos et eorum quemlibet tunc fieri et esse potentes in dicta civitate" (Sentence of Rinaldo and others, July 6, 1440, *Commis. Rin.*, iii. 667).

⁴ Ammirato, xxi. 22.

⁵ Cavalcanti, l. xiii. c. 9, vol. ii, p. 88. See book xii. c. 11, p. 51. This author gives Rinaldo's speech. Machiavelli, v. 79 A; Ammirato, xxi. 22.

embark in a struggle without the certainty of powerful resources—"enter a vessel without biscuits;"¹ and the danger for those who lured him into Tuscany was so terrible as to warrant a reconciliation between Cosimo and his most mistrustful countrymen.

But what were the resources? The famous Vitelleschi was suspected, the Florentine Cardinal, as he was called, officer of the Pontifical States while the Pope resided at Florence. Did he not show regret to have driven Rinaldo to arms? Did he not feel a lasting rancour towards Sforza, his conqueror in the Marches, and to the two Republics who had denounced him to his master for the embezzlement of 20,000 florins? The rancour of this mitred blackguard was to be dreaded. Living in Rome like a cruel and arrogant prince, he laid waste for the pleasure of devastating; he promised his soldiers a hundred days' indulgence for every foot of olive ground they would break down.² It was he, they said, who had advised the Duke to send Piccinino into Tuscany. A letter in cipher was intercepted in which he suggested to this last-named that they should join their forces, and it was shown to the Pope.³ Eugene IV. was even persuaded that, having subjected Florence, his criminal legate would have him removed in order to seize the tiara.⁴

These were, of course, pure inventions, except the overtures to Piccinino. Upheld by this disturbing prelate, the Count of Urbino, and the Malatesti,⁵ Piccinino was able to advance. He left his winter quarters (February 7, 1440) with 6000 men. After crossing the Po, he rallied 3000 of Vitelleschi's men, and advanced towards the south to the territory of Faenza.⁶ All this time Sforza was cooling his heels before Brescia, condemned to inaction until the snow melted. Not wishing to

¹ Cavalcanti, l. xii. c. 13, vol. ii. p. 57.

² *Giorn. Napol.*, xxi. 1107.

³ G. B. Poggio, *Vita di Nic. Picc.*, p. 165, 166.

⁴ Poggio, xx. 406.

⁵ Cavalcanti, l. xi. c. 13, vol. ii. p. 58.

⁶ Simoneta, xxi. 286; G. B. Poggio, *Vita di Nic. Picc.*, p. 165; Machiavelli, v. 79 B; Ammirato, xxi. 22.

descend from the lord to the condottiere,¹ he wanted to fly to the rescue of the Marches threatened. The Venetians feigned to retain him. Florence solved the difficulty. Neri Capponi² started for Venice with the order to sustain Giuliano Davanzati, the orator of his country. Both saw the danger for the Venetian possessions in stripping Lombardy, and they promised to raise another army to oppose Piccinino.³

Sforza assisted at these deliberations impatiently, for he would not confide to others the defence of his domains. It was doubtful if he would submit to the resolution adopted. But sometimes events are hurried. Vitelleschi paid with his life for his letter in cipher.⁴ The Malatesti, on the point of going over to Piccinino, changed their minds, and remained faithful to their obligations. Gian Paolo Orsini, captain of Florence, redeemed Rimini,⁵ and there was no longer any need to rescue the Marches. Sforza was willing to remain in Lombardy if paid his salary. Even more, an offer of ninety thousand florins persuaded him that he was strong enough to take the offensive by sending Neri Capponi with a thousand horses into Tuscany (April 18).⁶

It was indeed necessary to defend it. Piccinino was roaming round, looking to see how he might enter. He wanted to force the passage of Marradi, at the foot of the mountains of the valley of Lamona, which separate the Tuscan from the Romagna territories. Protected by a stream of water at the bottom of a precipice, these rocks could arrest an army for

¹ Neri Capponi, xviii. 1191-1192; Machiavelli, v. 80 A.

² Neri had just been named for the fifth time one of the Ten of War with Cosimo, Leon. Bruni, Angelo Acciajuoli, the principal citizens; such was the importance of this war. See Bonincontri, xxi. 149.

³ Neri Capponi, xviii. 1191; Simoneta, xxi. 286.

⁴ He was all-powerful at Rome. The commander of the castle of S. Angelo captured him by perfidy and had him killed, March 18, 1440. See details in Bonincontri, xxi. 149; *Mesticanza di Paulo Petrone*, xxiv. 1123; Platina, *Vita Eugenii IV.*, p. 275; Boninsegni, p. 71; Cavalcanti, xiv. 3, vol. ii. p. 106. All these writers admit his violent end, but Platina accuses the Florentines instead of the Pope. Salvi (*Ist. di Pistoia*, ii. 302) believes in an accidental death.

⁵ Neri Capponi, xviii. 1192; Machiavelli, v. 80 B; Ammirato, xxi. 22.

⁶ Neri Capponi, xviii. 1122; Ammirato, xxi. 24.

several months; but Bartolommeo Orlandini, who commanded for the Florentines, took flight, "like the peasant who mistook the hornet's buzz for the sound of the trumpet,"¹ and did not stop until he came to Borgo San Lorenzo. This left Piccinino free to advance without resistance to the mountains of Fiesole (April 10), and ravage all the country within three miles of Florence, camp at Remola, pass the Arno, and spread terror. In the official documents his soldiers are charged with all sorts of abominations,² which are doubtless exaggerated. Cavalcanti had the curiosity to question the women who sought refuge behind the town walls with the men and beasts. "We were only beaten and robbed," they replied—a trifle in those days. They had not even committed the traditional outrage of shortening their skirts.³ The adventurer Piccinino was no longer a barbarian. The Renaissance had influenced him. He threatened all who burnt objects of art and beauty with death.⁴ It was his soldiers who described him as a terror in their own interests. "Yield at once," they shouted outside the gates of Florence; "don't wait for Niccolò, for in an instant we will enter with him!" And in the neighbourhood the bells clanged violently to provoke a rising in the town.⁵

This rising, promised by Rinaldo to his allies, was not unlikely. The Florentines were agitated "like fish in a poisoned sea."⁶ Their streets, crowded with *contadini* and cattle, were in confusion bordering upon disorder. The approach of famine was felt, and every one was under suspicion.⁷ Thanks to this supplement from those outside, never reputed faithful, Cosimo's enemies seemed to increase to a majority. His friends profited by his difficulties to insist upon high pay for their services, and prevent the repression of abuses by which they profited.

¹ Cavalcanti, l. xiii. c. 2, vol. ii. p. 65.

² Sentence of Rinaldo and others, July 6, 1440. *Commiss. Rin.*, iii. 667.

³ Cavalcanti, l. xiii. c. 3, vol. ii. p. 67.

⁴ Cavalcanti, l. xiii. c. 3, vol. ii. p. 67.

⁵ Sentence of Rinaldo. *Commiss. Rin.*, iii. 667.

⁶ Cavalcanti, l. xiii. c. 1, vol. ii. p. 62.

⁷ L. Bruni, xix. 940; Simoneta, xxi. 287.

“We gave you back to your country,” they said; “you are in our debt.” Counsel rained. Some wanted to have the prisons emptied and filled with the suspects; others clamoured for examples—that is, executions. There were many, whom Cavalcanti regarded as insane, who were of the “beastly” opinion that the exiles should be recalled to bring about calm.

Not knowing to whom he should listen, like a good Tartufe, Cosimo said, “Would it not be better for the Republic that I should go?” This would not have served either his accomplices, who enjoyed security and favours through him, or the people who remained faithful to him, through fear of vengeance if the exiles returned. Neri Capponi, friend at the eleventh hour, henceforth devoted, asked Orsini to have in readiness for the Master’s defence three hundred saddled horses,¹ so seriously was he menaced. Quite recently returned from Venice, Neri gave a seasonable spur to the moral faculties of the Florentines; he even undertook the command of the military operations. With the small band of cavaliers that Sforza had given him, and a few foot-soldiers raised in the ranks of the people, he ousted the enemy from Remola and arrested their depredations, while Puccio Pucci by energetic speeches shamed his countrymen in their inertia. Following the erudite fashion of the day, he recalled the Persian story of the women who stripped themselves and shouted to their sons who were fighting without heart, “Cowards, attack the Medes, or return to those from whom you sprang!”²

Florence being protected from surprise, thanks to Neri Capponi, Rinaldo wanted Piccinino to establish himself at Pistoia, where family ties formed a strong support for the Albizzi. But Piccinino did not share the fury of the exiles. Proud of his independence besides, he preferred to go towards the Casentino, where a warm welcome awaited him.³ He

¹ Cavalcanti, l. xiii. c. 6, vol. ii. pp. 73-76.

² Cavalcanti, l. xiii. c. 7, vol. ii. p. 76. (The translation is modified.—*Trans.*)

³ Neri Capponi, xviii. 1193; L. Bruni, xix. 940; Poggio, xx. 406; Machiavelli, v. 81 A; Ammirato, xxi. 23, 24.

knew this, and so did the Florentines. At Venice Neri Capponi represented the enmity of the Count of Poppi as one of the dangers of his country.¹

Francesco de Battifolle, Count of Poppi, was the heir of the famous Guidi who had owned this mountainous district for more than four centuries. Upon the mountain sides and heights he possessed several castles, and even to-day that which he inhabited may still be seen, magnificently situated.² Belonging to a branch of the ancient family of the Guelphs, how did he happen to be the enemy of a town above and beyond all Guelph? Surrounded by republican territories, it was his interest to be on good terms with it. Having obtained, with the title of recommendation, the restitution of the property of which the legate Vitelleschi had robbed him, having been appointed vicar or commissioner in the Casentino, and being provided by the Florentines with bombs for his defence there,³ he owed devotion to his protectors. But this subjection humiliated him and lowered him in his own eyes. To strengthen himself by alliances, he gave one of his daughters to the condottiere Fortebracci,⁴ and hoped to marry the other, the beautiful Gualdrada, to Piero de Cosimo,⁵ though Piero's attentions, by calculated modesty, were given to a Florentine of middle-class life, Lucrezia Tornabuoni.⁶ This was how Francesco de Battifolle became the enemy of Florence; this was why he had called Piccinino to his aid,⁷ "unlike the pheasant, that believes itself unseen when it hides its head under its wings."⁸

That this clever captain should cut Florence off from Pisa, which supplied him with food, or from Arezzo and Perouse,

¹ Neri Capponi, xviii. 1188.

² Gino Capponi, ii. 20.

³ Boninsegni, p. 72; Machiavelli, v. p. 81 A.

⁴ Cavalcanti, l. xiii. c. 2, vol. ii. p. 95; Neri Capponi, *La Cacciata del Conte di Poppi*, xviii. 1117-19; Bonincontri, xxi. 148.

⁵ See Fabroni (*Doc.*, p. 147), letter of Battifolle, dated July 25, 1435, proving the marriage projects.

⁶ Fabroni, p. 81; Ammirato, xxi. 24.

⁷ Cavalcanti, l. xiv. c. 7, vol. ii. p. 112.

⁸ Cavalcanti invents his letter. See l. xiii. c. 11, vol. ii. p. 92.

the road of the Pontifical army coming to her rescue, it mattered little, so that she was cut off.¹ In a few days he took Bibbiena and Romena. But, to his great surprise, his success ended here. He was kept more than a month before the little castle of San Niccolò, situated at the foot of the mountains that separate the Casentino from the Val d'Arno. Florence had roused courage by offering protection to the women and children, and promising the men, if they were defeated, to establish them in the fertile country of Pisa.² There were no defections in the invaded province, and even in Florence, in spite of the provocations of the exiles, there was no movement.

Thus it was impossible to attack the Florentine walls, and to stick eternally in the rocky Casentino, as Battifolle proposed, was not Piccinino's plan—"his horses could not live upon stones."³ He preferred a turn with Prouse, his own country.⁴ He believed his fame would decide his compatriots to acknowledge him as lord, as of old they had acknowledged his patron Braccio: he only obtained from them a thousand florins to turn on his heels. Same humiliation before Cortona and Città di Castello. He was reduced to applaud the successes of Sforza in Lombardy, which compelled the Duke to recall his unfortunate captain.⁵

But before retracing his path, Piccinino was determined to fight. His military fame was implicated; the Florentine exiles pressed him; and finally, he wanted to protect the Count of Poppi against the vengeance he easily foresaw. Success seemed probable, for the Florentine camp was the camp of Agramant, the court of King Confusion.⁶ Neri Capponi and Ber-

¹ L. Bruni, xix. 941; Boninsegni, p. 72; G. B. Poggio, *Vita di Nic. Picc.*, p. 166; Ammirato, xxi. 28.

² Cavalcanti, l. xiv. c. 12, 16, 20-22, vol. ii. p. 114-132; Bonincontri, xxi. 150; Boninsegni, p. 72; Poggio, xx. 411; Machiavelli, v. 81 B; Ammirato, xxi. 25.

³ Machiavelli, v. 81 B; Ammirato, xxi. 29.

⁴ Neri Capponi, xviii. 1194; Cavalcanti, xiv. 21, vol. ii. p. 136.

⁵ Neri Capponi, xviii. 1194; Cavalcanti, l. xiv. c. 31, vol. ii. p. 144; G. B. Poggio, *Vita di Nic. Picc.*, p. 166; Machiavelli, v. 81 B; Ammirato, xxi. 26.

⁶ Neri Capponi, xviii. 1194; Ammirato, xxi. 27.

nardetto de' Medicis were there, commissioners of the Republic,¹ Gian Paolo Orsini was commander.² The Patriarch of Aquilia was the chief of the Pontifical contingent.³ Micheletto Sforza Attendolo commanded another levy. These chiefs, all more or less warriors, disagreed upon one point—upon the recognition of the authority, the acceptance of the interference of two merchants, of two intrusive outsiders. The Ten and the Signory were obliged to enjoin a temporising policy, leaving nothing to chance, although the army showed the respectable front of 9000 horses. This tactic was wise, for Piccinino was near at hand. Let him attack if he dared.

He had to dare, for he needed success to cover his retreat. But the position of the two armies was such that an attack was not easy on either side, and disadvantage lay in hurry. Upon the hillock crowned by the castle of Anghiari the Florentines were placed stairways. At the bottom, a few yards distant, a little stream ran through sharp banks, spanned by a single bridge, which southward flowed into the Tiber. Between the Tiber, which sheltered Borgo San Sepolcro, and this tributary, which sheltered Anghiari, spread a plain of four or five thousand feet.⁴ Whoever started the fight should pass the bridge under the enemy's fire. Piccinino could only reach it by crossing the plain, and the plain was cut by ditches to mark the limits of the property parcelled out, receive the rains, and prevent the cattle from browsing upon the seeds.⁵ The attack was difficult and the retreat dangerous. Both difficulties and perils he hoped to lessen by offering battle on St. Peter's day, 29th June, a feast then nearly as great as St. John's; and in the afternoon, when the sun was hottest, when the Florentines, regarding this as a sacred day, in a sort of

¹ Sentence of Rinaldo. *Commiss. Rin.*, iii. 667.

² Cavalcanti, l. xiv. c. 24, vol. ii. p. 136.

³ He was called Luigi Scarampi, being the Pope's doctor, and was made cardinal and patriarch of Aquilia.

⁴ Letter of Neri Capponi to the Ten, June 25, 1440, in G. Capponi, ii. 22, n. 1.

⁵ Decembrio, xx. 1081.

truce with the Almighty, should have laid aside their arms, even part of their garments, to give themselves up to pleasure.¹ As well, he knew them to be without videttes or outposts—a common error in those days, and a grave one; for it is not an affair of a few minutes to jump into heavy armour, harness horses, and prepare for combat.²

On the 28th a false attack was attempted, so as to divert suspicion from the next day. On the morning of the 29th the commissaries wrote: "Yesterday we nearly engaged in battle. Four lances were broken, and then we retreated. Niccolò came from Borgo with a few men, and found us ready. This morning in his camp there is a good deal of fire. We all believe he is going to the right-about; but where will he go? We shall soon know."³ In the afternoon, before sunset, Micheletto Attendolo, an old stager, more vigilant than his colleagues, thought he perceived in the distance a cloud of dust coming slowly towards Anghiari. He scented the enemy and called the dispersed soldiers to arms. Followed by those who flew to him, he took his stand in front of the bridge. The legate and Orsini and the commissaries flanked him right and left, and the infantry was placed along the bank to prevent any one from wading the torrent. The surprise fell flat; the enemy's plan was thwarted.

There remained two alternatives: to beat a retreat or attempt to cross the bridge. The intrepid captain did not hesitate. He pushed forward his Milanese, whom Micheletto vigorously beat back. Astorre Manfredi and Francesco de Piccinino hastened to the rescue with the remainder of the ducal army, balanced the combat, and drove the Florentines back to the ascent of Anghiari. The aggressor was henceforth placed upon ground transformed by Orsini into an esplanade, and suitable for a battle. There he was uncovered, threatened on

¹ Poggio, xx. 413, and G. B. Poggio, *Vita di Nic. Picc.*, p. 167; Ammirato, xxi. 36.

² Sismondi, vi. 66.

³ Text in G. Capponi, ii. 22, n. 2.

both sides by the legate and by Orsini. The place was not tenable, and he entrenched himself upon the bridge, which he held for two long hours. At last, however, he gave in, fell back, and found himself again upon the left bank, pursued, tumbled into the ditches by the Florentine cavalry, cut down by the arrows of the infantry and carbines of the longest range.¹ To rally was impossible, still more so to return to the charge. Even the time lost in arming themselves turned to the advantage of the Florentines, for they arrived like a reserve, fresh and ready for their exhausted adversaries. Nature, too, lent them her aid; at sunset a violent wind blew from the mountain, raising dust in the eyes of those Milanese that had not yet run away.

The defeat was complete. The standard of the ducal captain fell into the hands of the conquerors, with a large number of arms and men and horses. But according to Neri Capponi, an irrefutable authority upon the subject, out of 1940 prisoners, there were only 400 soldiers; the rest were people from Borgo, mere scum of the battlefield. Out of twenty-six, twenty-two chiefs were taken; only six were brought to the camp, their friends in the Florentine army having procured the evasion of the others.² Neri is silent upon the number of the slain; but we must not take seriously Machiavelli's ugly joke about one solitary dead man fallen from his horse and trampled under foot;³ it was made to discredit the mercenaries, and history was not its place. Other authors mention from forty to sixty

¹ Decembrio, xx. 1082.

² Neri Capponi, xviii. 1195; Boninsegni, p. 73; Decembrio, xx. 1082; Simoneta, xxi. 292; L. Bruni, xix. 942; Poggio, xx. 413; G. B. Poggio, *Vita di Nic. Picc.*, p. 167; Machiavelli, v. 83 A; Ammirato, xxi. 28; Fabroni, p. 82, and letter of Michele Attendolo to Cosimo, July 7, 1440; *ibid.*, *Doc.*, p. 147. Here L. Bruni is nearly as great an authority as Neri Capponi, for he was one of the Ten of the War. He died four years later, and his Commentary goes no farther, which is less celebrated than his History, but just as elegant, and perhaps more useful. See again a letter of the legate, Scarampi, to the inhabitants of Spoleta in Graziani, *Cron. di Perugia (Arch. stor.*, 1st ser. xvi. 459, n. 1), and Cipolla, p. 472.

³ Machiavelli, v. 83 A.

slain, and speak of from two to four hundred wounded.¹ For such a success but little blood was spilled.

Montesquieu would have reproached the Florentines as he did Hannibal for not having followed up their victory. The next day, June 30, Neri Capponi wanted to rush upon Piccinino and the 15,000 men that were left him; but it was too late, since the defeated had had the night to get away; and yet, save Orsini and Micheletto,² there were none to follow him to regain lost time. They gave as excuses their wounded, their prisoners, their booty—even the heat of the day, when they had lost the morning in discussion. However, the burning sun, which prevented them from pursuing Piccinino, did not prevent them from hurrying to Arezzo to put their booty in security. Thus Piccinino had ample leisure to beat a retreat towards Romagna. It was only on the 1st July that the Florentines thought of replacing him at Borgo San Sepolcro, without even knowing to whom the place would belong.

In their fright, the inhabitants wished to swear allegiance to the Republic; to avert the legate's anger, it was necessary to turn them from this idea, for had they not engaged verbally to return to the Church all the ancient possessions of the Church that should be regained?³ The legate was not to be reconciled because the Florentines had learned to shout "Long live the Church!"⁴ He separated himself from his allies with half the army to re-establish throughout the Papal States pontifical authority.⁵ But his master, short of money, was more manage-

¹ Biondo Flavio de Forli (*Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum imperii Liber*, Venice, 15th century edit., in Gothic characters, not paged) says 70 slain and 800 wounded among the Milanese; of the Florentines, 10 dead and 200 wounded. Poggio (xx. 414), 40 Florentines slain and 200 wounded, 10 of which died of their wounds. According to Ammirato (xxi. 28), the artillery overthrew 600 horses on the battlefield.

² Micheletto declares himself of Neri's opinion. See letter quoted in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 148.

³ Neri Capponi, xviii. 1195; Boninsegni, p. 73; Machiavelli, v. 83 A; Ammirato, xxi. 29.

⁴ Letter of the Commissaries to the Ten, July 1, 1440, in G. Capponi, ii. 24, n. 2.

⁵ Machiavelli, v. 83 B; Ammirato, xxi. 29.

able; for 25,000 ducats he gave up all the property of Borgo San Sepolcro. Although less important than Lucca, Borgo was worth something; she guaranteed Tuscany from the offensive return of the Milanese; she transported the seat of war farther off; above all, she upset the intrigues of the exiles, and offered a chance of finishing with them. Cosimo, like the oligarchy of old, was fortunate at the dawn of his power.

He could act harshly: he was naturally severe; such was his reputation even before his triumphant return. Under him Florence changed some of her best customs. In the olden times, when she exiled the husband, she tolerated the wife; Dante's wife was allowed to remain in her dwelling and watch over her husband's interests. But he forbade the wife of an exile to pass through her native town. Francesco Gianfigliuzzi was proscribed with all his family. His daughter-in-law lay ill at Sienna, his son at Bologna. The unfortunate mother, nursing the one, wanted to go to the other. Her shortest road was by Florence. She passed through in disguise. The first time she escaped, but not the second time. Returning, she was captured and subjected to torture. Cavalcanti saw her, her members disjointed, arms upheld by two *berrovieri*, carried to the *Stinche*, to the quarter reserved for women of ill-fame.¹

When he could not get hold of a man, Cosimo dishonoured him. He had his principal enemies, Rinaldo and his son Ormanno, Ludovico des Rossi, Lamberto des Lamberteschi, Bernardo Barbadori, Stefano Peruzzi, Baldassare and Niccolò Gianfigliuzzi,² painted in a state of nature, hung from the feet, and placed upon the façade of the Podestal palace.

Under the new reign, it was the poet-hangman's important

¹ April or May 1440. Cavalcanti, l. xiv. c. 4, vol. ii. p. 107.

² "Eorum figuris et pitturis ad naturale detraendis" (Act of Condemnation, 6th and 13th July 1440. *Commiss. Rin.*, iii. 667). The painter charged with the commission owes him his name and renown. It was Andrea del Castagno, called "degli impiccati," died in 1457, whom Vasari charges with the same office for the Pazzi, condemned in 1478, while in reality it was Sandro Botticelli. M. Guasti proves this (*Commiss. Rin.*, iii. 669). See lower down, p. 396.

function to explain the picture by infamous verses. The profits and the privileges belonged to Antonio Palagio. He was buffoon of the Signory, and his duty was to sing during the meals of the priors moral songs and poems upon the great deeds of the Republic.¹ In 1430 he was devoted to the Albizzi. Delighted with his courtesy, Rinaldo, as a distinguished mark of confidence, gave him his letters for the Ten.² In 1440, in his verses to order, he called Rinaldo "an ungrateful traitor, the cruellest and wickedest of all;" Ormanno is "rough and deceitful;" Rossi is "a liar, bold in words and cowardly in action;" Lamberteschi, "brainless;" Barbadori, "the son of the spoiler of churches and hospitals;" Niccolò Gianfigliuzzi, "a mule and a bastard, traitor to his country and his God."³

The chief reproach against the creator of these finished poems is to have turned with the wind like a weathercock; but his victims are not all worthy of respect, and notably upon the last-named much more might have been said had there been space in an explanatory verse. Abbot of Passignano, Niccolò Gianfigliuzzi was accused by peasants before the Holy See of adultery and sacrilege, of having converted his abbey into a place of ill-fame, of having used the sacred cupboard, in which the head of the glorious St. John Gualbert was preserved, to violate a young girl whom he had been charged to exorcise.⁴ But the undeniable misdemeanours of the few were noisily quoted, and odiously used against all the defeated of the oligarchy.

¹ *Commiss. Rin.*, iii. 669. This buffoon was of good family, and had in the Church of the Servi a tomb, and even a chapel. See *Lettere di un Notaro*, ii. 86, n. 1. Del Palagio is often mentioned in these letters.

² Letter of Rinaldo to Ormanno, February 3, 1430 (*Commiss. LIV. Rin.*, iii. 345).

³ See these verses in *Commiss. Rin.*, iii. 670. They were also published in Cavalcanti, *Append. II.* 577, from MS. belonging to G. Capponi, and in the *Testi di lingua inediti* of Guglielmo Mansi, Rome, 1816.

⁴ "Che la badia era ridotta a bordello . . . l'armario ove sta la testa del glorioso S. Gualberto come letto a piumaccio adoperò ad ingravidare una fanciulla . . . con la medicina, non che gli cacciasse lo spirito, ma egli gliene aggiunse uno di nuovo" (Cavalcanti, l. xiv. c. 5, vol. ii. p. 109).

Violence, once open, now became hypocritical; outside, everything was handsomely painted. Liberty was never more spoken of than in the public documents of the day. The word is mentioned in nearly every line.¹ Amongst the mouthers there were a few honest souls, and they were duped by Cosimo's affected modesty. These dupes clearly saw that Rinaldo's return would not advance liberty, but they failed to see that with Cosimo liberty was merely a word and a snare, and that the only difference was to groan under one tyrant, or groan under many.

For the exiles this time everything was at an end, and hopeful as Rinaldo had hitherto been, he was now quit of illusions. Old as he was, he thought of a voyage beyond the seas;² since the year 1406 he had vowed to go to the Holy Sepulchre,³ and it was easy enough to send away Ormanno and his ungrateful and insubmissive son.⁴ He had just married one of his daughters, betrothed in prosperous times to Piero Panciatichi, and jilted by this practical person in the hour of disgrace,⁵ to Gherardo Gambacorti, son of the ancient lord of Pisa. The old athlete considered himself free, when death seized him in Ancona, on the point of departure, in the midst of his family.⁶

Of his three sons, not one saw Florence again. Two, Maso and Giovanni, were already citizens of Ancona before their father's death.⁷ The eldest, Ormanno, basely compromised the dignity of an exile. Needy and wishing to draw his wife's

¹ See sentence of Rinaldo and others, *Commiss. Rin.*, iii. 666. The words "free" and "liberty" are to be met with four times at least.

² "Cum ejus atatem et amos considero, vereor ne maris tedium ac labor ejus senectutem obruat." (Letter of Francesco Filelfo, October 18, 1440, *Commiss. Rin.*, iii. 673.)

³ In his notes, dated December 19, 1406, we find, "Promissio sancti sepulcri" (*Commiss. Rin.*, xvii. i. 116).

⁴ "Dum tibi mavis quam patri obsequi, omnibus es ridiculo" (Letter from Filelfo to Ormanno, October 30, 1444, *ibid.*).

⁵ Cavalcanti, l. xiv. c. 35, vol. ii. p. 151.

⁶ M. Guasti establishes this date. See *Commiss. Rin.*, iii. 677. Cf. Machiavelli, v. 83; Ammirato, xxi. 32.

⁷ February 24, 1441 (*Commiss. Rin.*, iii. 681).

dowry, he sent her to Florence, knowing that she risked her liberty and life. Wanting a loan of a hundred ducats, he applied to Giovanni de' Cosimo, son of his father's mortal enemy.¹ The first of the family that was allowed to return to their country was the grandson of Maso, a great-grandson of Rinaldo, and that only in 1478,² in the time of Lorenzo, Piero's son. Neither Piero nor Cosimo had regarded these degenerate folk as harmless.

It was necessary to follow at once the fortunes of this family, great in the past, in the first place, because its complete defeat shows the rapid and open acquisition of power by Cosimo, and then because such was the fate, long since forgotten, of many a family who had not a Passerini like the Alberti, or a Guasti like the Albizzi, to retrace and record their vicissitudes. We return to the day succeeding the battle of Anghiari, and to the other consequences of this great success.

The possession of Borgo San Sepolcro promised ample fruits of victory and an opportunity of gathering them. Bernardetto de' Medici, one of the commissaries of the army, forced several places into submission.³ Neri Capponi, his colleague, and Niccolò Gambacorti, took possession of the rebel castles in the Casentino, and drove Battifolle from his hereditary lands. The imprudent Count of Poppi was the last of the Guidi to exercise sovereignty in Tuscany. His departure was not unaccompanied by outrage. As he retired with his wife, his children, and forty laden mules (July 31),⁴ Neri Capponi said to him, with harsh irony, "You are free to go and play the great lord in Germany." "I should like to see you there," replied the insulted man, and the offender laughed in his face.⁵ It was customary in

¹ See the two letters in *Commiss. Rin.*, iii. 680-681.

² M. Guasti gives the documents (*ibid.*, p. 682).

³ Valialla, Monteagutello, Monterchi. See Bernardetto's letter to the Ten, July 4, 1440, in G. Capponi, ii. 25, n. 1.

⁴ Fragments of letters of July 25 and 31, in G. Capponi, ii. 25, n. 2; Boninsegni, p. 74; Bonincontri, xxi. 150; Poggio, xx. 414; Machiavelli, v. 84 A; Ammirato, xxi. 31.

⁵ Neri Capponi, *La Cacciata del Conte di Poppi*, xviii. 12-20.

Florence to sneer at the fallen¹ and overwhelm the conquerors with admiration. Neri and Bernardetto were "wreathed in triumphant gifts."² The Council decided to offer them the honour of knighthood, and in case they refused it, to give them a pennant, a harnessed horse, a magnificent casque, and a buckler with the arms of the people. These gifts they accepted, and others of a like sort, from the *parte guelfa*.³ They passed for good captains solely because Michele Attendolo had shown some military instinct. This was because the results obtained were worth something. They might have been greater by the pursuit of Piccinino,⁴ but, as we have seen, it was not the commissaries' fault if Piccinino had found retreat so easy.

Delighted with his success, Cosimo desired no further victories; he wished for peace to assure his conquests, as well as firmly to establish his power. In the happy period of his ascending fortune, he had not long to wait for repose; in Lombardy even the most warlike were beginning to weary of the vicissitudes of war. Now conqueror, then conquered, never pushing his advantages to their limits because he had his future father-in-law to humour,⁵ Sforza might have paid dearly for his tactics if Piccinino, who by his clever strategy had besieged him in his camp,⁶ had not compromised an almost assured triumph by a political blunder.

He made the mistake of believing that the hour had come to make terms with the Duke; he wrote saying that at the age for retirement, and after so many services, he did not even possess a corner of ground for burial, and he demanded

¹ See in Ammirato (xxi. 30), towards Eufrosina, widow of Bartolommeo de' Pietramala, when obliged to yield them Monterchi.

² Cavalcanti, *Seconda Storia*, c. 16, ii. 158.

³ Neri Capponi, *Comment.*, xviii. 1197; Boninsegni, p. 73, simply says, "Donarona di cavalleria," without mentioning refusal of belt, which Neri hints.

⁴ Machiavelli, v. 83 A.

⁵ See details in *Ist. Bresc.*, xxi. 820, 822; Sabellico, l. v. ff. 628-642; Simoneta, xxi. 289-302; Poggio, xx. 416, G. B. Poggio, *Vita di Nic. Picc.*, p. 169; Ammirato, xxi. 33.

⁶ Simoneta, xxi. 304; Neri Capponi, xviii. 1198; Platina, xx. 838; Sabellico, l. v. f. 634; Ammirato, xxi. 34.

Plaisancia or his dismissal with so much noise and fuss that a like appetite grew among his comrades. Luigi de San Severino demanded Novaro; Luigi del Verme, Tortona; Taliano, Furtano; Bosco, Figaruolo in Alexandrin; and the others in proportion. In the absence of a legitimate heir, might not the Duke's heritage be cut up even during his lifetime?¹ But the Duke took the proposal ill. He preferred to yield to his enemies than to his exacting followers; he advanced a pretext admirable on his part and in his century—respect for his word. At the last moment he remembered that he had promised his daughter to Francesco Sforza. Seriously this time, although in private, he offered him the position of arbitrator, and promised him Cremona as a dowry, with its territories as a mortgage for that which Piccinino had taken in the territories of Bergamo.²

Piccinino was in despair; another had reaped what he had sown. But threatened with a worse fate, even with being handed over to his rival,³ he played a bad game with a pleasant face. When he and Sforza met, these two good Christians flung themselves into each other's arms, repeatedly kissed one another on the lips, and shed tears of joy.⁴ The camps intermingled, and appeared as one at feasts and festivities. It was the marriage of a middle-aged man of forty with a child of sixteen (October 24), and when it was solemnised, Sforza took possession of Cremona and Pontremoli.⁵ He had not lost anything by waiting, and a handsome heritage crowned his patience.

Abandoned by him, Venice and Florence necessarily fell under his arbitration. At Cavriana, November 20, 1441, he dictated to them the conditions of peace. As usual, each of the contracting parties recovered what he had lost in the hostilities.

¹ Simoneta, xxi. 306; Machiavelli, vi. 85 B; Ammirato, xxi. 35.

² Simoneta, xxi. 306.

³ Sabellico, l. v. p. 645; Platina, xx. 838; Machiavelli, vi. 85 B; Ammirato, xxi. 35.

⁴ *Ist. Bresc.*, xxi. 828; Poggio, xx. 418; G. B. Poggio, *Vita di Nic. Picc.*, p. 169.

⁵ Bonincontri, xxi. 82. The marriage contract, dated October 24, 1441, will be found in the *Archivio Sforzesco*, Nat. Lib. MS. Ital., 1583, f. 14.

This was an arrest of warlike ambition. In Venice, satisfied or resigned, Sforza could rejoin the Florentine negotiators, Neri Capponi and Agnolo Acciajuoli, without fear of the tragic fate of Carmagnola, which his very prudent father-in-law had held up to him as a prospect.¹ Florence was beside herself with joy; her old condottiere, her ally of yesterday, was powerful; she could economise and set in order her prey of the Casentino. Her prudent master had realised his wishes; he was going to enjoy his strength. The least content was Eugene IV. If he recovered Romagna, if he averted the settlement of Piccinino in Perugia and Sienna,² he quite understood that he could not recover from the mediator, the arbitrator of peace, what he possessed among the ecclesiastical lands.³ This was the black cloud, destined soon to increase and announce fresh storms.

¹ The text of the treaty may be seen in the *Archivio Sforzesco*, copies No. 1597, ff. 17-32.

² Neri Capponi, xviii. 1199.

³ Simoneta, xxi. 340; Neri Capponi, xviii. 1198; Sanuto, xxii. 1102; Sabellico, l. v. f. 645; Poggio, xx. 419; Navagero, xxiii. 1108; Machiavelli, vi. 85 B; Ammirato, xxi. 36.

CHAPTER II.

ESTABLISHMENT OF COSIMO BY HIS HOME POLICY.

1435—1444.

Cosimo's efforts to draw the Council of Bâle and Ferrara to Florence—The Pope and the Greek Emperor at Florence (January 27, February 16, 1439)—Meeting of the Council at S. M. Novella (February 26)—Debates upon the union—Closing sitting (July 6)—The advantages of the Council to the Florentines—Cosimo's bad government—The rivalry between Cosimo and Neri Capponi—Attack upon latter warded off—Baldaccio d'Anghiari—His past life—Murder of Baldaccio (September 6, 1441)—Indignation of Italy—Neri Capponi's decline—Financial administration of Cosimo—Repeal of the *catasto* (1441)—The *scala* or progressive tax—Multiplicity of taxes—The *graziosa* tax (1443)—The severities of collectorship—Emigration—Condemnation of the *morosi*—Dishonesty towards the state creditors—Jobbing the titles of the *monti*—Moral consequences of private ruins—State usury—The persistent opposition of the upper classes—*Balie* to overcome them (1444)—Fresh severities—*Balie* to nullify lot-drawing—Revision of the laws and statutes.

WHILE the political and military events recorded in the preceding chapter were being accomplished abroad, at home Cosimo, who profited by them without directing them, ruled in all things. Already, according to Guicciardini, he was absolute master, and, as was his wont, sought only his own interest.¹ He was clever enough to find it more than once in the general good. At the outset he obtained for Florence the honour, vainly sought by the oligarchy, of becoming the seat of a Council. In 1408 the Albizzi had been obliged to content themselves with one at Pisa under their protection, and the Council of Pisa, without achieving aught for religion, had not benefited the Republic.² The Council of Florence was

¹ "Avendo i Medici sempre per ultimo fine il ben suo particolare . . . che ad ognuno fussi noto che loro erano i padroni assoluti" (*Del reggimento di Firenze, Opere inedite*, ii. 41, Flor., 1858.)

² See our *Hist.*, vol. vi. p. 170—176.

destined to hold another place in history, and to serve the interests of the town that gave it hospitality, still more those of the ambitious family who had turned this stream of wealth towards the Arno.

Quite recently the fathers of Bâle, violent in the pursuit of the work of Constance, had summoned Eugene IV. before them, and upon his refusal to appear had declared him guilty of contumacy (October 1, 1437).¹ It was a new schism in prospect. The ambassadors of the princes had for the most part protested, and the Pope was bold enough to transfer the Council to Ferrara.² This was not a retort inspired by spite, for the idea was an old one, justified by serious reasons. He had long been in negotiation with the Byzantine Emperor. John Paleologos, threatened by the Turks and in need of protection for his crown, was by no means averse to a union of the Greek and Latin Churches;³ but he, and still more his clergy, had no desire for a distant voyage to some town in France or Germany; he had refused Bâle, Avignon, and the towns of Savoy.⁴ Then Eugene had proposed Ferrara; if need were, he would have proposed Constantinople, and would have deputed a legate to preside.⁵

These negotiations had at an early period suggested to Cosimo the hope of attracting the Council to Florence. As early as July 3, 1436, he addressed formal proposals to Bâle. As he promised the seventy thousand florins claimed by the cardinals and prelates for changing their seat, he believed himself assured of success. On August 28 of the same year all the provisions were made; and as for the pensions, the choice of abode, the prices of food, the Signory left

¹ *Ann. Eccl.*, 1437, § 18, vol. xxviii. p. 248; Labbe, vol. xii. p. 592. See Sismondi on the Council, vi. 91 sq., and Reumont, *Lorenzo de' Medici il Magnifico*, c. 7, vol. i. p. 170 sq., Leipzig, 1874.

² Labbe, vol. xiii. p. 876.

³ See, on origin of this question, Vast, *Le Cardinal Bessarion*, l. i. c. 4, 37 sq., Paris, 1878.

⁴ *Ann. Eccl.*, 1434, § 13, vol. xxviii. p. 176; Labbe, xiii. 578, 580.

⁵ *Ann. Eccl.*, 1435, § 8, vol. xxviii. p. 192.

all to the discretion of the legate.¹ The Greeks, they wrote, are to have twenty-five houses *absque ulla mercedis pensione*. It was arranged to send two large armed galleys to Constantinople to meet them, with the Emperor and the Patriarch, leaving two others to guard the capital during the absence of its sovereign. If seventy florins were not enough, the Florentines would go as far as a hundred.² The rumour having spread that the approach to Florence was insecure, the Cardinals of St. Sabina and St. Peter were reassured on October 30: it was false to say that Piccinino had appeared outside the gates of the town; it was on the territory of Lucca, and as Sforza had opposed him, he had not advanced farther. A little later (December 24) there was a protest against the assertion that the Republic was in league with the Pope; it entertained for him only the respect due to his dignity.³ Lying has always been diplomatic; but this impudent specimen can only be explained by some reticence or abuse of word or interpretation.

During the year 1437 the negotiations were continued. There were objections to overcome; it had to be established "that no country is richer than Florence, or produces a better quality of wine, oil, wheat, and fruit. It is an orchard with more country-houses than elsewhere. The fertile lands of Prato, Pistoia, Pisa, Arezzo ensure wealth. The buildings are admirable. Who speaks of civil war? There are only four or five exiles of mark. Of a citadel there is no need. Finally, the approach to Florence is easy, whether you travel by sea as far as Pisa, or land at Ravenna and cross Italy by the road of Rimini."⁴

To the great disappointment of Florence, Ferrara nevertheless obtained the preference. The Council opened on January 8, 1438, but was sparsely attended. The Greeks, the Emperor,

¹ Doc. in Giuseppe Müller, *Documenti sulle relazioni delle città toscane colli Oriente cristiano e coi Turchi fino all' anno 1531*, p. 159. Flor., 1879.

² Gius. Müller, *Docum.*, p. 161.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 162, 163.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 167, 168.

the Patriarch of Constantinople were in no hurry; one after another they arrived, the Emperor not until March 4.¹ In April it was decided to await the Western princes and the fathers of Bâle; thus was time lost until October 8; then, after this long delay, was opened the first session of the two Churches.²

By this Cosimo was a little vexed. He kept up friendly relations with those fathers of Bâle who had refused to come to Ferrara, lent them two thousand florins in gold, payable in indulgences granted to whoever should favour the reconciliation of the Greeks with Rome.³ But circumstances served him; he was soon able to return to his design of securing the Council. Ferrara was not without its drawbacks; the Pope was afraid of a surprise on the part of Piccinino, now master of Bologna and Romagna, or of the departure of the Greeks, who were too near the sea and their own country, and were besides indisposed to settle in Italy, especially if the sound of arms reached them. He wanted money to meet their demands, and had only Cosimo to turn to, who promised him more than he gave if he would come to Florence. The plague decided him. It broke out in Ferrara, and, according to custom, every one fled.⁴ On January 22, 1439, a nobleman of the Eastern Empire, John Dissipato, came to Florence on a mission to inspect the houses destined for the Greeks;⁵ a notable success, of which Venice was jealous. "You want the Pope," said the Venetian

¹ Letter of the Signory of Venice to Marco Dandolo, spokesman with the Pope, February 17, 1438, in Buser, *Die Beziehungen des Medicer zu Frankreich*, Append., p. 349. Cf. Vast, *Le Card. Bessarion*, l. ii. c. 1, p. 53 note, and 59.

² The *acta græca*, a first-class source, in Labbe, vol. xiii. p. 5-824, and also in the collections of the Councils of Hardouin, vol. ix., and of Mansi, vol. xxix. M. Vast gives carefully all the sources, ancient and modern. See *Le Card. Bess.*, p. 47, 48, 56, 63, &c.

³ The act of restitution, dated August 31, 1438, was published by M. Luciano Scarabelli, *Dichiarazione di documenti di storia piemontese*, in *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser. vol. xiii. p. 299, note 3.

⁴ See our *Hist.*, vol. vi. p. 96, 115, 238-242, 382, note 1.

⁵ The Cardinal of Sant' Angelo wrote to Ferrara recommending Dissipato to Giuliano and Lorenzo des Medici. *Doc.*, in Gius. Muller, p. 172.

lords, "you want the Council, you want Lucca; the entire world would not satisfy you."¹

On January 27, Eugene IV. made his entrance into Florence, where he had so long resided. He was followed on February 12 by the Patriarch, and on the 16th by the Emperor.² A magnificent reception was accorded to the Emperor. In order to have the official right to preside over these solemnities, Cosimo had himself named Gonfalonier of Justice. He came on foot with the Signory to meet Paleologos at the gates of the town. Leonardo Bruni, chancellor of the Republic, conducted the Greek Cæsar to the houses of the exiled Peruzzi, which were assigned him. The music of fifes and other instruments rent the air. An immense crowd in bright apparel gathered in the gaily decorated streets, at the windows, upon the walls, upon the roofs. Unfortunately a violent storm dispersed the crowd, all save the procession, which was obliged to shorten its rate, and reached its destination drenched to the skin.³

On the 26th February the Council met for the first time. Santa Maria Novello opened its doors, and, as in bygone days, Eugene IV. established himself therein. It was only on the 13th April that the debates on the union began. We need not report them here. We know that matters were other than satisfactory.⁴ Several members of the assembly wanted to leave; upon the advice of Bessarion, Archbishop of Nicea, they were detained as captives; even those who ventured into the country upon a pleasure party were arrested.⁵ Only a small minority pronounced for the union of the two Churches. One day, seeing the greater part abstain from voting, the Emperor cried out, "Why are the lower benches silent?" This simple

¹ Cavalcanti, l. xi. c. 13, vol. ii. p. 25.

² Leon. Morelli, *Del.*, xix. 170, 171; Boninsegni, p. 68.

³ *Acta græca*, in Labbe, xiii. 120; *De ingressu Græcorum in civitatem Flor.*, *ibid.*, p. 1032; Vast, l. ii. c. 2, p. 75.

⁴ The debate may be followed in Vast, p. 78 sq.

⁵ Vast, p. 84.

question worked sudden conversions. "Everybody accepts and consents,"¹ replied the Archbishop of Nicodemia. And no one contradicted him. But of what use conversions when mistrust was born? Small and well-packed commissions replaced the general sessions. Bessarion substituted diplomacy for his now futile eloquence; he acted as intermediary between the Pope and the Emperor; he negotiated the adhesions without much success at first. To secure a sufficient number, it was necessary to deprive the Greek fathers of their small pension.² This sacrilegious step has more than once succeeded.

On the 6th July, in Santa Maria del Fiore, the closing sitting took place. The Pope officiated. The fathers, numbering over five hundred, Greek and Latin, were robed in their grand sacerdotal costumes. Cardinal Cesarini read aloud the Latin text of the decree, and Bessarion the Greek.³ Each held the two texts in two columns upon a long parchment. Then they embraced in token of established union. A long procession ended the proceedings; all the Greeks, with the Emperor at their head, then all the Latins, knelt to the Pope. After six centuries of separation the agreement was an event. To preserve its memory, an inscription was engraven upon marble beside the sacristy of the Duomo. This was wise, as the solemn act was not lasting; later, the Greek Church rejected the union, except a small congregation, which even to-day is called in the East the United Greeks.⁴

¹ Syropoulos, sect. viii. c. 5, in Vast, p. 84.

² Vast, p. 104, 107.

³ Ammirato (xxi. 19) says, instead of naming Bessarion, "a Greek prelate whose name he does not remember." However, Bessarion was well known and well thought of.

⁴ *Ann. Eccl.*, 1439, § 1, vol. xxviii. p. 289; Labbe, xiii. 509; Boninsegni, p. 70; Ammirato, xxi. 15-19; Gibbon, ch. 66, *Pent. Litt.*, ed., vol. ii. p. 840-844; Vast, p. 108. Copies of the union are to be found in the Laurentina and the Archivio di Stato, with the signatures of the popes, the emperors, and the fathers (G. Capponi, ii. 14, note). Cf. Ceccoli, *Studi storici sul Concilio di Firenze*; Paul Calligas, Professor of the Faculty of Law at Athens, *Μελέται και λόγοι*, four studies, of which the first concerns the Council of Florence, Athens, 1882, vol. i. Svo, 550 pages; Warschauer, *Ueber die Quellen zur Geschichte der Florentiner Concils*, inaugural address, Breslau, 1881; Markos Rinieri, *Ἱστορικὰ μελέται*.

A little by chance, and much by the cleverness of Cosimo, Florence resumed her secular rôle of the chief Guelph town. The Council which bears her name in history was a Guelph reaction against the spirit of religious revolt which was abroad at the beginning of the fifteenth century, which menaced the supremacy of the Pope in all that was absolute, and freed France and Germany by the pragmatic sanctions of Frankfort and Bruges. This Council of strife suppressed all the restrictions touching the supremacy, and placed it even above the assembled Church. This grave declaration was not in the least ineffectual; it even succeeded in rending the reform in pieces, and became the law of the Church in modern times, still more so in our own days. Meanwhile the Council of Bâle was forsaken by its most illustrious champions; the pragmatic sanctions did not last long; the union restored the prestige of Eugene IV. and the Holy See, not without augmenting that of Cosimo and the brilliant city subjected to his rule.¹ Militant orthodoxy encountered the genius of the Renaissance, revived by the passing sojourn of so many Greeks. These Greeks also stayed at Ferrara, and yet Ferrara was hardly influenced by them; as the Church says, there are vessels of election.

Of lesser advantage, but still of some consequence, were the relations formed with the Byzantine Emperor. His departure was fixed for the 26th April.² He visited the lords on the *ringhiera*, and made the Gonfalonier, Filippo Carducci, Count of the Palace, with the right of adding to his arms the two-headed imperial eagle, of creating notaries and legitimatising his natural sons; and this last prerogative, it appears,

Τὸ Βυζάντιον καὶ ἡ ἐν Βασιλεῖα σύνοδος, Athens, 1882. See the bibliographical notice before the works of M. Vast, and particularly the works of M. Von Goethe, *Studien und Forschungen über das Leben und die Zeit des Cardinal Bessarion*, Iena, 1871, and of M. Fromman, *Zur Kritik des Florentiner Unions Decret*, Leipzig, 1870.

¹ See Vast, p. 112, 113.

² Cambi (*Del.*, xx. 220) says the 16th, but this must be a printer's error. Morelli gives the 26th as the date (*Del.*, xix. 170). As Easter in 1439 fell on the 5th April, Wednesday, as Cambi indicates, it was certainly the 26th, and not the 16th.

was extended to eight priors. The Republic obtained exemption from taxes and favours throughout the Empire, which, it is true, hardly extended beyond the walls of Constantinople. In this capital the Pisan consul's house was given to the Florentines for their own consul, and the privileges accorded to the Pisan Republic in all Roumania were given to the Florentines, who replaced it.¹ This was only an exchange of services. Not being able to furnish the Greeks with the fleet and the army he had promised them against the Turks, the Pope induced Cosimo, banker to the Holy See, to advance them 12,000 florins. Quitting Florence in turn, to continue the Council at Rome without the Greeks, he included in the promotion of seventeen cardinals a Florentine, Alberto des Alberti, a member of that family so long unfortunate, whose exile had only ended with the downfall of the oligarchy.²

Cosimo was henceforth strong enough to rid himself of fear, but it is the fate of absolute power to live in terror. He could tolerate nothing great around him. Before softening himself, he must crumble everything to dust at his feet. This merchant did not believe that he could become august through mildness, and his severity was in no way ameliorated. Far from it; Cavalcanti "blushes for his bad government;"³ he states that "all the pleasant ways of civil existence are transformed into insults, robberies, adulteries, and other abominations that are the negation of all political life."⁴ In the beginning of his indigestible but interesting work he called Cosimo "a divine rather than a mortal man;"⁵ later he recalls this description to retract it, for "where prosperity enters follow ingratitude

¹ Cambi, *Del.*, xx. 220; Ammirato, xxi. 19. The promises made were kept. See Giuseppe Müller (p. 172, 144), the corrected diplomas in Greek, dated August 1439, conferring upon the Florentine priors, with the privileges of the Pisans, the right of creating imperial notaries.

² *Ann. Eccl.*, 1442, § 1, vol. xxviii. p. 386. Eugene left Florence in December 1439, according to Morelli (*Del.*, xix. 170); according to Cambi, in February 1440 (*Del.*, xx. 226).

³ Cavalcanti, *Seconda Storia*, c. 28, vol. ii. p. 197.

⁴ *Ibid.*, c. 1, p. 156.

⁵ L. i. c. 1, vol. i. p. 3.

and pride.”¹ Upon the master his friends modelled themselves. Puccio, who gave his name to the party,² amassed in a short time a large fortune by discreditable means. “Would to heaven,” adds our author, “that there were no worse citizens in the Republic!”³ But there were, and in such a number that he supposes “the universality.”⁴ The apologists of Cosimo call him an enemy come from the *Stinche*. Be it so; but he entered it under the oligarchy in 1427,⁵ and recovered his liberty under the new regime. Nobody can quote an offence, a subsequent wound, to set his judgment astray. They call him an enemy because he is severe. Why not say as much of G. B. Poggio, who, in turn, speaks of “the shameful habits of the Republic, scarcely worthy at any time of a free city?”⁶ Cosimo is sacred, so the legend wills it. It was the reign of a preconceived idea, which lasted four hundred years.

An end to generalities. The sight of the man in his relations with the principal Florentines is worth them all. Above all others, Neri Capponi had the right of being jealous of him, and we may believe that in his heart he was; but in words he was ever courteous; he resigned himself with good grace to serve the master he could hope neither to overthrow nor replace.⁷ What matter? His wrongs were unpardonable. With more reputation, according to Cosimo himself, and perhaps brains, than the most renowned of his fellow-countrymen,⁸ he was sober, temperate, adroit in business matters, helpful to the needy, just to the rich and powerful, far-seeing in danger, patient in adversity, modest in success.⁹

¹ Cavalcanti, *Seconda Storia*, c. 1, vol. ii. p. 156.

² See our *Hist.*, vol. vi. p. 383.

³ *Seconda Storia*, c. 23, vol. ii. p. 189.

⁴ *Ibid.*, c. 1, vol. ii. p. 156.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 155, n. 1.

⁶ *Vita di Nic. Piccinino*, p. 147.

⁷ Passerini judges him as a man of legal opposition, not a conspirator (*Arch. Stor.*, 3rd ser., vol. iii. 2nd part, p. 144).

⁸ Guicciardini, *Storia Fiorentina*, c. 1, *Op. ined.*, vol. iii. p. 7.

⁹ Cavalcanti, *Seconda Storia*, c. 25, vol. ii. p. 192.

Often ambassador and commissary in the camp, he had constant relations with courts, as with the condottieri and the soldiers. To him was due, above all, the honour of the brilliant success of Anghiari and the fortunate conquest of the Casentino. Victory was hereditary in his family. Was it not to his father that Florence owed the acquisition of Pisa? Cosimo had no equal glory to his account: comparison was not favourable to him. "The one is richer," wrote Cavalcanti, "the other wiser."¹ They did not always agree in the direction of public affairs. For example, Neri preferred the alliance with powerful Venice to that with the adventurer Sforza. Some day he might more prudently assume the rôle of the defeated Rinaldo; thus he fell under Cosimo's suspicion, and made himself dreaded without obtaining any gratitude for the victory of Anghiari, which had definitely placed him above his fellows. Would Cosimo take the bull by the horns, and front in an attack this prospective rival, too clever to offer his side? No; he was of opinion that government cannot be carried on by paternosters,² but he had the crafty ways of those who mutter them. Not to touch Neri, and yet to lower him and teach him a lesson that would benefit others, such was the design of this artist in subterfuges, this political trickster.

There lived at this time in Florence a captain of infantry, Baldaccio d'Anghiari, who was considered the right hand of Neri Capponi. "If Neri wished to oppose Cosimo, it was believed that, once Gonfalonier, he might, with the aid of Baldaccio, overthrow the Republic."³ Reputed virtuous, he had placed his faith in a man of the sack and rope type, to whom virtue was the least consideration. Baldaccio was naturally dreaded. Proofs of his bravery⁴ are quoted, but certain

¹ Cavalcanti, *Seconda Storia*, c. 16, vol. ii. p. 159.

² G. Capponi, *Stor. di Fir.*, ii. 30.

³ Cavalcanti, *Sec. Stor.*, c. 16, vol. ii. p. 160. This assertion doubtless inspired the first lines of Machiavelli's 6th book.

⁴ Boninsegni, p. 75; Cavalcanti, l. viii. c. 5, vol. i. p. 489.

scarcely honourable adventures were whispered about. In the year 1420 he had risked his life and fortune by putting to death one of the chiefs of his country. In 1424, after the battle of Zagonara, he retired to his castle of Ranco to live like a brigand. He killed one of his enemies; he attacked, wounded, gagged, bound, and left in a wood a Florentine driver in order to seize his merchandise and money. Obligated to flee, he was condemned to the gallows for the robbery, and also to pay five hundred pounds in reparation for the murder.¹ This time he boldly cried out against injustice; his victim had injured him, and, after all, he had not died of his wounds. As for the robbery, one must live; and thus it is that soldiers live.

Doubtless this noble defence left him whiter than snow, for in 1430 and 1435 he was in the Florentine full pay, although he did not support the number of men his *condotta* obliged him to support. In 1437 he was made citizen, and allowed to dispense with the construction of a house in the town, according to the statutes; instead, he was presented with one valuing 400 florins. Upon his own request, he was exempted of all *catasto* and all *estimo*; ² so that his privileges were not less under Cosimo than in the time of the oligarchy. When, on February 7, 1439, he married Annalena Malatesta—a splendid marriage for an adventurer like him—his witnesses were Neri Capponi, Piero Guicciardini, and Luca des Albizzi, Rinaldo's brother, who had always held himself aloof from his family, the three most important citizens. This captain of infantry was raised in the ranks, for he was then called *equitum peditumque conductor*.³

Thus he continued his capricious existence of condottiere,

¹ See Passerini's work on Baldaccio in the *Arch. Stor.*, 3rd ser., vol. iii. 2nd part, p. 132. It was compiled from the archives, and is followed by two documents, with a *registro* of the others.

² Passerini in the *Arch. Stor.*, 3rd ser., vol. iii. 2nd part, p. 134, 136.

³ Carte degli sponsali di Annalena Malatesta con Baldaccio d'Anghiari. *Giorn. degli Arch. Tosc.*, i. 42.

now in the pay of Florence, now in that of her enemies, unchanged only in his proceedings, sacking, robbing, cruelty, and perfidy.¹ To the reproaches of the Ten he had a reply quite ready: those whom he pillaged were carrying food to the enemy. If a transient peace reduced him to inaction, he plundered his friends, and the vicar of Firenzuola complains: "These hordes are so undisciplined, that if they remain here three or four days they will ruin the Alps for ten years; they chase the people from their homes."² But he protested; his men were monks, not soldiers.³ From Firenzuola he went towards Piombino, then to Arezzo, to appropriate these towns and enrich himself; as well as others, he was made sleepless by the principality of Sforza. At last the measure was full and the vase overflowed; upon the public places of Florence murmurs were heard upon his misdeeds, and his punishment was demanded.⁴ They might have cried long for it in vain if Cosimo had not hoped, in striking him, to reach Neri Capponi.

An occasion was needed: Eugene IV. furnished it by engaging Baldaccio at the tempting price of 8000 florins in gold (September 5, 1441). This friend of yesterday was possibly the enemy of to-morrow.⁵ The alarm was widespread. Cosimo took advantage of it to advise the finishing of Baldaccio. He had already carefully prepared the stroke. Neri Capponi was sent as ambassador to Venice,⁶ and Bartolommeo Orlandini was installed in the office of Gonfalonier of Justice, this stained title having been conferred upon him

¹ Passerini, *Arch. Stor.*, 3rd ser., vol. iii. part 2, p. 137-139.

² Letter to the Ten, August 20, 1439, Carteggio, vol. xi. No. 118.

³ Passerini, *Arch. Stor.*, *ibid.*, p. 140.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 142. This is the man of whom Machiavelli says that Neri Capponi "per le sue virtù delle quali sempre era stato testimone l'amava" (vi. 86 B). It was Machiavelli who induced Sismondi to regard Baldaccio as an honourable and worthy man (vi. 111).

⁵ Vespasiano, *Vita di Giannozzo Manetti*, § 9, *Spicil. Rom.*, i. 658; Naldo Naldi, *Vita di Giannozzo Manetti*, R. I. S. xx. 544, after Vespasiano.

⁶ G. Capponi, *Stor. di Fir.*, ii. 31.

by the jugglery of the ballot.¹ The creature of the Medici, audacious, shameless, full of hatred for the exiles,² Orlandini was the coward who abandoned the year before the passage of Marradi to the invasion of Piccinino.³ Baldaccio blamed aloud and by letter this culpable weakness; for this he had become the bugbear of the new chief of the Signory. This latter, furnished with instructions, eager for vengeance, hatched the plot with the Priors, his colleagues. Only one, Cante Compagni, kept out of it; but he timorously respected the secret of the deliberations.

On the 6th of September the captain's cavalier and eight of his *fanti* were hidden in one of the lord's chambers.⁴ Baldaccio, walking on the square under the Pisan roofs, was summoned before them.⁵ For an hour, spent in seeking advice,⁶ Baldaccio hesitated to obey, but at last he decided, entered the palace, met Orlandini, and crossed, chatting with him, the landing outside the chambers of the Signory. At the end was one of the Priors, Francesco de Tommaso. Upon the signal of the Gonfalonier, which was passed without delay, the *fanti* came out of their hiding-place and precipitated themselves upon the victim, flung him down and bound him, wounded him desperately in the struggle, then threw him half dead out of the window into the captain's courtyard. Upon the threshold the wretch's head was cut off, and his corpse remained for the day exposed to the jeers of the multitude, drunk with joy.

But this joy did not last. The next day, Florence, enlight-

¹ G. Capponi seems to think as we do in this matter, for he writes the word "accuser:" "Quasi che fosse scelto a quel fine" (ii. 28).

² Cavalcanti, *Sec. Stor.*, c. 16, vol. ii. p. 161. Orlandini had already been Gonfalonier of Justice in May 1438.

³ Machiavelli, vi. 86 B; Ammirato, xxi. 37. The latter by mistake writes Anghiari for Marradi.

⁴ This Prior was Francesco de Tommaso Giovanni, who left the *ricordi* manuscripts, where are incompletely stated Baldaccio's misdeeds.

⁵ Naldo Naldi, xx. 545. The ordinary promenade was in face of the Pisan roofs. See our *Hist.*, vol. v. p. 50, n. 2.

⁶ *Arch. Stor.*, loc. cit., p. 143. Cavalcanti avers that he asked Cosimo for advice (*Sec. Stor.*, c. 16, vol. ii. p. 161). According to Machiavelli (vi. 87 A) he obeys unsuspectingly.

ened, qualified the murder as "abominable and brutal."¹ The cry of indignation was echoed all over Italy, where Visconti and Sforza were having their subjects rent by dogs and buried alive. The Republic and "the iniquitous man" she had chosen as leader were dishonoured by it.² Eugene IV., who lost his condottiere, gave way to interested anger, and probably looked forward to overthrowing Cosimo for Rinaldo. Giannozzo Manetti, a man of letters, had much difficulty in appeasing his rage.³ What above all struck the imagination was not the murder, an ordinary affair, but the mystery which overhung the cause of the murder. Contemporary writers are of various opinions.⁴ Machiavelli alone was not mistaken. With his clear insight into facts imperfectly known to him, he alleges the sole motive to have been Baldaccio's friendship for Neri.⁵

Cosimo did not bend before the tempest thus imprudently provoked. With cold-blooded decision, he declared the dead Baldaccio a rebel and confiscated his property.⁶ The Council declared that there was no cause for disquietude in this

¹ Cavalcanti, *Sec. Stor.*, c. 16, vol. ii. p. 160-162; Boninsegni, p. 75; Machiavelli, vi. 87 A; Ammirato, xxi. 37; *Arch. Stor.*, loc. cit., p. 143. Cavalcanti is horrified by the confiscation of the goods of a corpse, but this was an immemorial custom in Florence.

² Cavalcanti, *Sec. Stor.*, c. 16, vol. ii. p. 162.

³ Naldo Naldi, xx. 544. Passerini (p. 146) believes in the Pope's plots; Ammirato also; but being a priest, he does not dare accuse the Pope.

⁴ Boninsegni (p. 75) accuses some of the priors, and does not appear to suspect Cosimo and Orlandini. Cambi (*Del.*, xx. 234) believes it was punishment for the sack of Suvereto. See *Arch. Stor.*, loc. cit., p. 138. But Baldaccio had done worse, and Passerini rejects the supposition of Cambi (*ibid.*, p. 144). Bart. de la Pugliola (*Cron. Bol.*, xviii. 665) believes that it was the wish to take Piombino from the Appiani. Ammirato (xxi. 37) places Neri's friendship among the motives, without lending it more importance than others.

⁵ Machiavelli, vi. 86 B.

⁶ The widow, having lost her only child, turned her house leading to the Romana gate into a convent, where she lived with a few pious women, and which was called the Annalena Monastery. It existed still in the beginning of this century. It was the same house that the Republic had given to Baldaccio on making him a citizen. Did it escape confiscation because Baldaccio had given it over to his wife? See *Arch. Stor.*, loc. cit., p. 147; *Giorn. degli Arch. Tosc.*, i. 42 sq.; G. Capponi. ii. 28, and authors quoted in preceding notes.

treacherous action. Before such an imperturbable will anger vanished like smoke; there was not stuff in the fifteenth century for indignation. The fruits of the murder realised its perpetrator's expectation; Neri Capponi lost friends, power, and reputation.¹ At Venice, where he still was his colleague in embassy, Agnolo Acciajuoli alone signed the treaty of peace with Milan (November 20, 1441). When he reaches this crisis in his life, Neri in his commentaries ceases to place himself foremost; for two years he shows that he was sent on no embassy or commission. But weary, no doubt, of obscurity, he consented to accept a minor position. This time, complete peace was made between him and Cosimo; it was the abdication of the last rival that the new power had to fear.²

One of Cosimo's means of action was shedding blood and spreading terror; the other, and surer, was manipulating the public treasury. Guicciardini expressly says that Cosimo made use of taxes as a dagger against his enemies and those whom he suspected of enmity.³

Like other millionaires, Florence was always in difficulties. As the debts entered to the *monte* brought in heavy interest,⁴ she beggared her people without profit. While war was carried on by greedy adventurers, and peace was made by money,⁵ she was reduced to levy taxes ten and fifteen times a year.⁶ Cosimo would have appeared as a benefactor had he chosen to remedy this evil; but far from that, he aggravated it. He remained narrowly faithful to the old and superannuated politics which crushed and ruined his adversaries. Scarcely was he returned from exile when he seized hold of the famous instrument of *balie* (1434). Instituting it without limits, he nominated to the *bourses* trustworthy men, who

¹ Machiavelli, vi. 87 A.

² Ammirato, xxi. 38; G. Capponi, *Stor. di Fir.*, ii. 31.

³ *Del Règim. di Fir.*, *Op. ined.*, vol. iii. p. 68.

⁴ This is seen on nearly every page of the *Lettere di un notaro*.

⁵ The acquisition alone of Borgo San Sepolcro, sold by the Pope, cost twenty-five thousand ducats. See Cavalcanti, p. 221.

⁶ Guasti, *Proemio alle Lettere di un notaro*, p. lvii.

were charged to fix the taxes, and who all had injuries to revenge or envies to feed.

The first significant act was the repeal of the *catasto*, or survey of land; the new masters, like the old, did not desire equality in taxes. A tax defined by the law, permitting each one to know the extent of his obligation, would have seemed like deliverance. Cosimo and his abettors wished to guard the right arbitrarily to overwhelm those whom they disliked. Thus, to reach more surely the object of their hatred or mistrust, they condemned one entire generation, nay, many, to live under the sword of Damocles, the thread of which often broke. Though immoral and impolitic, because wealth is exhaustible, this system is comprehensible in short-sighted financiers, who look for immediate interest. Some people there were attracted by the bait of public offices. Others, too humble to aspire to them, or too busy with their trades, were only influenced by constant dipping into their purses, and by being obliged to pay their share of the enormous expenses, of which all the advantage and honour were for the Medici.¹

Cosimo, besides, knew the trade of despotic demagogue; he brought in a system of taxes, which the *ciompi* had proposed in 1378, suited to the common people, as well as taxes ever can suit them. What they demanded then in their famous petition was, that all creditors inscribed in the book of the *monti* should in twelve years recover their capital without touching the interest, and that no further *prestanza* or loan should be raised without repeating the distribution which was called the *estimo*.² Thanks to their disaster, their petition, become a provision, had no effect. The only concession that the defeated obtained was in October 1378, the order to begin the reform of the *estimo*.³ Cosimo did more to meet their

¹ See Guicciardini, *Del Reggim. di Fir.*, *Op. ined.*, ii. 41. Canestrini (p. 207) gives a summary of the three pages in which Guicciardini, outside these considerations, recalls these events as far as 1479.

² Arts. 8 and 7. See our *Hist.*, vol. v. p. 247.

³ See March. de Coppo, Rub. 809; *Del.*, xv. 63.

wishes ; he introduced a system which the Florentines named the *scala*, the ladder, and which we call progressive taxation.¹ When the poor paid one per cent. upon their income, the wealthy paid two, three, four, and even more, except, of course, the "governors" that were always spared or spared themselves. If by chance they happened to be taxed (1441), the credulous people regarded it as an act of justice ;² but it was solely because ready money was absolutely necessary. The need was such, that shortly twenty-four taxes were levied, as many as four or six together. The half of these taxes produced in the year 1442 above 180,000 florins in gold.³

This was not enough. In 1443 a new tax, the *graziosa*, was levied. Its name was not appropriate, for never was tax less pleasing to the payers.⁴ Three degrees were established. The lowest paid 4 per cent., the middle 16, the highest 33½. The first was worth fifty florins a year, and the third at least 1500. The division was left to the judgment, or, as the provision had it, "to the discretion and conscience of the divisors." These divisors had the right to grant diminutions and exemptions to those in whose families there were the sick or the feeble, with two exceptions ; they could not relieve those whose income exceeded 200 florins, and all diminutions should be approved by the Signory and the colleges, with a majority of twenty-eight voices. The total revenue of Florence was valued at 550,000 florins, and

¹ In Canestrini (p. 212, 217, n. 1) may be seen that the idea of progressive taxation was suggested in the projects of the *Ciampi*.

² "Che fu tenuto avessin posto giustamente" (Cambi, *Del.* xx. 231).

³ Cavalcanti, *Sec. Stor.*, c. 28, vol. ii. p. 198 ; Canestrini, p. 170. Cf. a message from Nicodemo Tranchedini de Pontremoli, Francesco Sforza's ambassador at Florence, to Sforza, March 23, 1454. *Bibl. Nat. de Paris, Arch. Sfor.*, Origin., No. 1586, vol. iv. f. 246.

⁴ Canestrini (p. 219) seeks to explain this strange name. He imagines that it is due to the fact that a favour was granted to the most numerous class. In the documents we often find the word "grazie di gravezze" in the sense of exoneration, total or partial. Nicodemo de Pontremoli in 1454 writes concerning a *gravezza* : "Chiamasi dispiacente, cioè che piace al comune et despiace a paganti" (*Bibl. Nat. de Paris, Arch. Sfor.*, Origin., No. 1586, vol. iv. f. 246. Message to Sforza, March 23, 1454).

this tax was exacted to bring in 80,000! It touched the revenues of the wealthy, variable and steady, the interests of the *monte* and of the people. Payments were made ten and twelve times; that is, each month, or very nearly so.¹ Pushing severity to the extreme, the law ordained that arrears should be hunted up, and even exacted arrears from those who had paid less than was due.²

We must follow the tax from the beginning if we wish to have a just idea of this golden age of so many historians. One of Sforza's ambassadors to Cosimo, whose friend he became, Nicodemo Tranchedini de Pontremoli, wrote to his master that the commune fixed and gathered in the taxes "arbitrarily."³ It did not hesitate to fling into "the horrors of the *Stinche*" those who did not pay; above all, the poor. To escape imprisonment, as well as intolerable burdens, many families went to live out of the town, in the country, or joined the exiles. These absentees were called *morosi*, that is, those behind-hand, and they were condemned, under harsh penalties, to remain outside. Many preferred to submit to this law rather than enter Florence, and this called for a more efficacious punishment. Twice a year messengers and *berrovieri* scoured the *contado*, emptied the houses, carried off the harvests and provisions, or destroyed them, and whatever they seized and destroyed was not deducted from the sum due; it was simply regarded as a punishment for non-payment. Those who did not forsake the town, "were they mere ancient shepherds who had got into office," called these malcontents savages, who went to look abroad for justice, or at least freedom.⁴

¹ Whence the expression "pagare in sei, dieci, dodici registri." See Canestrini, p. 214-218.

² Naldo Naldi, xx. 548; Vespasiano, *Vita di G. Manetti*, § 13, in *Spicil. Rom.*; i. 589; G. Capponi, ii. 32.

³ "E in albitrio del comuno rescoter da chi li pare il valsente et da chi li pare le gravezze" (*Arch. Sfor.*, Origin., No. 1586, vol. iv. f. 246; Dep. of March 23, 1454).

⁴ Cavalcanti, *Sec. Stor.*, c. 28, vol. ii. p. 198.

There were citizens who were both debtors and creditors to the commune; from them was exacted payment of the tax. Their credit, not being yet due, was not considered in the account. Credit was only allowed to the powerful; confiscated from the others, it was sold to second-rate friends¹ and insignificant but trustworthy persons, who bought it at a fourth or fifth of its value, sure that later they would be fully reimbursed. Thus it was, for example, that Puccio Pucci made a large fortune; poor at first, in spite of his silk trade, in seven years he made from the public treasury 54,000 florins in gold, "by fleecing the hungry."² Such ruin, according to Cavalcanti, caused sad moral perturbation. Widows, young girls, on the amount of their dowry, were refused the capital that was due to them, and had no other resource than evil living. "Many sons," he writes, "were present at the marriage of their mother without having known their father. I could name many of these unfortunates, if the honour of my country did not silence me."³

The worst was that, thanks to this system and the abuse of the *prestanze* and forced loans, few citizens were able to remain independent. The state crushed everybody. Its operations were reputed usurious even when usury was the habit of the time, when even theologians did not condemn it, when usurers, instead of being compared to brigands, as in the fourteenth century, were granted burial in consecrated ground.⁴ Our contemporary, Gino Capponi, says that the Medici studied to make the Republic poor and individuals rich.⁵ This is paying the Medici too much honour; amongst individuals they only enriched their friends, or those who wanted to become such. But, truth to say, this was the triumph of the

¹ Del secondo pelo.

² *Ibid.*, c. 23, p. 188.

³ Cavalcanti, *Sec. Stor.*, c. 29, p. 203.

⁴ Guasti (*Proemio alle Lettere di un notaro*, p. xiii.) quotes the texts of Passavanti and St. Antonin.

⁵ *Stor. di Fir.*, ii. 33.

Machiavellian art, which they alone could pursue, since the triumph presupposed unequalled wealth. By this means they were long upheld by the multitude, and constituting like the Albizzi the kernel of an aristocratic oligarchy, they were thereby able to establish themselves upon a solid basis, instead of remaining, like them, ineffectual.

The upper classes stood aloof from them as yet, and without their support no power is stable. This the Medici knew, and at length succeeded in conciliating them. The thing was to hold out, for everywhere men weary of turning their back upon success. But at this time they were still sulking, and their discontent was extreme.¹ Everything shocked them; the suppression of the *catasto*, the unparalleled severity in the levying of taxes,² jobbery with offices and with the *monti*, the enormity of burdens that they could neither support nor reject,³ "the adulteries, robberies, and innumerable injustices, to which the arrogance of the old government was preferable."⁴ Their opposition grew bold by deficiencies abroad that could not be hidden.⁵ To diminish it Cosimo spared nothing, but he scarcely gave evidence of genius or invention; he but walked upon the beaten track of his predecessors.

In accordance with the arrangement of 1434, it was the custom to alter the *bourses* every five years. The second occasion arrived in 1444. The general discontent broke out in this operation. At the polls the relations of the exiled and a number of suspects obtained a good many votes: "ballots of lily flowers of graceful aspect and ugly odour," spitefully

¹ Ammirato, courtier under the later Medici, pretends that only a few were discontented (xxii. 44), but he proves that he extenuates designedly, since Cosimo had to remedy this state of affairs, and, as Machiavelli says, after ten years of power, crush his enemies, increasing and making themselves heard (vi. 87 A).

² It is true that, under the Albizzi, those who paid neither taxes nor fines were condemned to death; but such a disproportionate sentence was less redoubtable than a milder one that might be applied, that appealed less to the gallery.

³ "La cittadinesche discordie ebbero principio da non avere pazienza delle misurate gravezze" (Cavalcanti, *Sec. Stor.*, c. 29, vol. ii. p. 202).

⁴ Cavalcanti, *Sec. Stor.*, c. 24, 25, vol. ii. p. 190, 194.

⁵ Ammirato, xxii. 44.

remarked the Government party.¹ Cosimo and his friends compelled the Signory entering upon office on the 1st May to see that the priors, their colleagues, and 250 other citizens, not chosen by chance, had this ballot drawn over again, and the assembly received as well the right to reform the basis of the taxes, and everything else, according to its will. Thus the outsiders found their troubles prolonged for ten years—that is, doubled—and ten citizens condemned to the *Stinche* for life commuted to banishment outside the town, to make way for other enemies. Giovanni Vespucci, an important personage, no doubt, since the authors mention him, was sent there. The Mancini, the Baroncelli, the Serragli, the Gianni, one of the Ridolfi, the son of Ser Viviano of the *Riformagioni*, Francesco de la Luna, who was supposed to have invented the *catasto*, and all the *accoppiatori* of 1443,² were *posti a sedere* (planted on their feet), or even deprived of their civic rights. One might quote other sentences whose motives were not admissible, such as that of Bartolommeo Fortini, officer of the *monte*. Somebody in power wanted his place. He got it; but later on the sentence was revoked, so crying a shame was it, and so popular was Fortini.³ Ser Filippo Pieruzzi, notary of the *Riformagioni*, chancellor of the Republic, another man of considerable renown, was dismissed and exiled ten miles away, though forbidden to leave the territory, doubtless because he knew all the state secrets.⁴ During

¹ *Seconda Storia*, c. 24, 25, vol. ii. p. 192.

² Boninsegni, p. 79; Cambi, *Del.*, xx. 246; Cavalcanti, *Sec. Stor.*, c. 25, vol. ii. p. 192; Ammirato, xxii. 44.

³ Vespasiano, *Vita di Bartolommeo Fortini*, in *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., vol. iv. part 1, p. 376. This life is not in the *Spicil. Rom.* of Mai.

⁴ Boninsegni, p. 79; Morelli, *Del.*, xix. 172; Vespasiano, *Vita di Ser Filippo Pieruzzi*, § 5, 6, in *Spicil. Rom.*, i. 503, 504; Ammirato, xxii. 44. Morelli and Machiavelli (vi. 87 A) call him Peruzzi; but Boninsegni and Cambi (*Del.*, xx. 245) say he was the son of Ser Ugolino Pieruzzi, the notary of whom mention has been made. Vespasiano (§ 1) says elsewhere, "Il padre fu poverissimo uomo da Vertine di Chianti." Thus he was not a Peruzzi. Vespasiano adds he was allowed to spend his exile at his estates of Vertine.

the two months' power of this Signory 245 citizens were struck down.¹

While the ground was thus being cleared, the *balie* created for five years ten *accoppiatori*, whose duty it was to name those who would be called to office before the public drawing in the *bourses*. If Cosimo's weapon was always hypocrisy, that of his instruments was effrontery. They were humble enough, too, for they conceded the right to destroy their work to the ten *accoppiatori*, named for such a long time, if we remember Florentine traditions, and destined visibly in the only way then possible to retain their power for a long period. Some of these agents of secret, and one may say despotic, policy belonged to old families: Almanno Salviati, Diotesalvi Neroni, one Soderini, and one Martelli, who, it seems, should have been more careful of an honourable name; the others were persons of no importance, newly come to Florence, and at the service of those by whom they lived.² Cavalcanti paints one of them, Domenico de Matteo de Ser Michele de Castelfiorentino, mean and proud, wicked and without faith, a prevaricator, with palm stretched for gifts, and as hideous morally as physically.³ The following year (1445) Cosimo, having had himself for the third time named Gonfalonier of Justice, instructed ten of his creatures to look through the books of the ancient *Riformagioni*, to modify all trammels that might be therein, and note all reforms and innovations that it would be advisable to introduce in the future by means of the *balie*. Neri Capponi was one of these eight creatures; he was reconciled and reinstated in favour since he had renounced a first rank.⁴

Thus little by little, but for centuries, was founded the power of a family of bankers and merchants whose aim was

¹ Leon. Morelli, *Del.*, xix. 172.

² Cambi, *Del.*, xx. 246; Machiavelli, vi. 87 A.

³ *Sec. Stor.*, c. 25, vol. ii. p. 194. This text, as well as the personal portrait, may be seen in G. Capponi, ii. 35, n. 2.

⁴ Cambi, *Del.*, xx. 246; Morelli, *Del.*, xix. 172; Boninsegni, p. 79; Machiavelli, vi. 87 A; Ammirato, xxii. 48. The latter gives eight names.

principality. Cosimo's actions were often odious, he was utterly unscrupulous, his cleverness was commonplace, and far from deserving the word genius; but if, as Buffon says, genius is long patience, this pitiless and crafty personage, who broke through every possible obstacle and turned it aside where he could not crush it, who could content himself with a slow progress so that it continued, may surely claim some part of it.

CHAPTER III.

COSIMO'S DOMINATION—WARS AND NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE SUCCESSION OF THE VISCONTI.

1442—1450.

Policy of peace and equilibrium in Florence—Peace and equilibrium broken with the kingdom of Naples—Sforza in the pay of René (1442)—Piccinino sent to Alphonsus by the Duke of Milan—Effacement of Cosimo—Double rôle of Eugene IV.—He leaves Florence, January 7, 1443—He recognises Alphonsus and joins him (April 9, June 14)—League renewed between Sforza, Venice, Florence, and Milan (October 18)—Sforza in the pay of Florence—Venice (October 30)—Jealousy and death of Piccinino (September 8, 1444)—Jealousy and coalition of the other Italian powers—Precarious situation of Sforza—The Venetian conquerors at Casalmaggiore (September 28, 1446)—Sforza, upon the advice of Cosimo, makes overtures to the Duke of Milan (November 10)—Last intrigue and death of the Duke (August 13, 1447)—His codicil in Alphonsus's favour—Precarious enfranchisement of the Milanese—Opposition of Cosimo and Neri Capponi—Alphonsus's march upon Tuscany (September)—He besieges Piombino (May 1448)—Florence succours the besieged—The siege is raised—Sforza in the pay of Milan—His victory at Caravaggio (September 15)—He goes over to the service of the defeated Venetians (October 18)—Florence turns a cold shoulder to him—Conquests of Sforza—Peace of Venice with Milan (September 24, 1449)—Milan yields to Sforza (February 26, 1450).

COSIMO DE' MEDICI loved war for war's sake as little as other Florentines. Besides, his personal power depended entirely upon peace. To keep down the beaten oligarchy, and substitute a new one which would regard him as chief, to free himself from those hungry underlings ready to devour the few chestnuts that they, as in the time of the *ciompi*, had seized from the fire, was a task that claimed all his attention, and was enough for his activity. On the day after Anghiari he began it. The vanity of Florence was satisfied. For the moment she enjoyed an unaccustomed security; she had her recent conquests to assimilate, and seeing her florins disappear in the pockets of the greedy condottieri, she felt as if she were

losing her life-blood. In her wish for repose, her ideas were in perfect harmony with those of the creator of her policy, although there was still much to conquer in his neighbourhood.

But the policy of peace became more and more difficult; a state cannot isolate itself like a parish. Situated in the heart of a peninsula, the Florentine state could only live according to her surroundings; peace was only possible if Venice checkmated Milan, and if either the house of Anjou or the Holy See kept the King of Naples in his place. It was more necessary to declare war against whichever of these powers threatened to crush or suppress her natural adversary than to economise or fill the public treasury or private purses.

Now Italian equilibrium, always unstable, was at this moment threatened in the south. René d'Anjou, prisoner in France, as soon as he knew of the testament that made him King of Naples,¹ since by this fortune he was once more solvent, was released and hurried into Italy (April 12, 1438). But unfortunate and mediocre, he soon lost to an adversary as lucky as he was clever all his possessions in Campania. Naples was even besieged and in need of food.²

The question was, would Florence succour this Frenchman, in her eyes preferable to the King of Aragon? She did not regard herself as compelled thereto; she thought it would be enough to give him to the care of Sforza, who claimed him.³ This was not much. The famous condottiere was then engaged in the war with Lombardy, and, besides, was bound to Alphonsus by a truce of ten years. This obstacle was raised by Alphonsus's imprudence in attacking Sforza's possessions in Campania, 1440-42.⁴ Released from his engagements, Count Francesco at once engaged himself in the pay of René

¹ See same vol., c. i. p. 22, 23.

² Simoneta, xxi. 311; Folietta, l. x. p. 235; Fazio, l. vi. in *Thes. Antiq. Ital.*, vol. ix. part 3, p. 92; *Giorn. Napol.*, xxi. 1109-1125; Lecoy de la Marche, *Le Roi René*, i. 112, 120, 136; H. Martin, v. 307-309, and 316, note; Sismondi, vi. 8, 9.

³ Letter of Cardinal Capona to Sforza, November 30, 1441, in Osio, iii. No. 231, p. 240; Simoneta, xxi. 311.

⁴ See details in Ricotti, iii. 87 sq., and Sismondi, vi. 97.

and the Pope.¹ Peace concluded north of the Po, he descended to the kingdom to replace a parcel of feeble lieutenants by a powerful army.² Personal troubles delayed him in the Marches, but this could not have been anticipated by anybody.

By a truly political inspiration, which repaired his previous error, Alphonsus claimed the help of Filippo Maria against his son-in-law. He divined the bitter rancour and invincible doubts the Duke must nourish against the adventurer he could not, even by giving him his daughter, detach from his enemies, Florence and Venice. If the Duke of Milan did not dare to violate the peace he had just concluded, he persuaded Piccinino to place himself at the head of the mercenaries licensed by Venice, and with them to cross into Bologna. Well furnished with Milanese gold, Piccinino offered Eugene IV. to recover for him the Marches of Ancona, which the Pontiff regretted so much to have given up to Sforza.³ The temptation was too strong; Eugene forgot at once that the Holy See had its best guarantee of independence in the reign of the princes of Anjou at Naples. Prodigal of pacific protestations, he named Piccinino Gonfalonier of the Church, and authorised him to surprise Todi, to besiege Assisi,⁴ while he was conceded the privilege of taking the name and arms of the house of Aragon.⁵ Thus the Pope drew near his traditional enemy, who, far from rushing into this alliance, was in treaty with Sforza⁶ and Piccinino at the same time, an excellent plan, he thought, to gain the one or the other without paying too dear for the privilege.

¹ Osio, vol. iii. No. 246, p. 267. The stipulators were: for the Pope, Lodovico Mezzarota or Scarampo, Patriarch of Aquilée, and for Sforza, Cosimo de Medici. The act was passed at Florence, April 13, 1442. The condottiere was to support the Pope with 6000 horse and 1000 infantry. *Arch. Sfor.*, Bibl. Nat. de Paris, MSS. No. 1583, f. 17.

² Simoneta, xxi. 313; Sismondi, vi. 98; Cipolla, p. 409.

³ See M. Valeri in *Arch. Stor. Lombardi*, Ann. xii. 1884, on domination of Sforza in the Marches.

⁴ Simoneta, xxi. 314; Machiavelli, vi. 86 A; Ammirato, xxii. 39.

⁵ Doc. of June 27, 1442, in *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., xvi. part 1, p. 485.

⁶ Doc. of July 26, 1442, in *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., xiii. 289.

We need not doubt that the touchy Florentines were vexed by these treaties, made without and against them; but Cosimo taught them patience. Neither formal hostilities nor direct injuries could disturb their phlegm. The agreement that they had established between Sforza and the Pope was broken; it was an unpleasant prospect if the Pope hastened the rupture.¹ Piccinino might seize Citta di Castello, included in the league, and banish the Florentine podestate; he might refuse to give back Modigliana to the Republic, and might enter Todi as conqueror while Alphonsus was entering Naples (June 2, 1442).² Cosimo contented himself with secretly hiring Sforza,³ and, with the agreement of Venice, proposed his mediation. The mediator was one of his family, Bernardetto de Medici, a keen business man, always to be seen in his shop, where he sold wool, and never upon the public places or in the palace, except when summoned thither.⁴ A clever negotiator, he twice forced the Pope and Piccinino to treat with Sforza; but scarcely was Sforza on the road to the Kingdom, counting upon pledged faith, than Eugene, in virtue of his pontifical right to break oaths, relieved Piccinino of his, and by this act discovered the field of hostilities to full daylight.⁵

In this affair the great politician was neither Cosimo nor Alphonsus, but Filippo Maria. In giving Piccinino to the Pope, he rid himself of an exacting servant, and by him of a son-in-law and enemy; at one stroke he weakened Venice and Florence, ever hostile to Milan. Vainly did these two Republics impose a truce of eight months; the two captains kissed and made friends, swore to observe the friendship, and

¹ Ammirato, xxii. 39.

² Simoneta, xxi. 316; *Giorn. Napol.*, xxi. 1125-1128; Bonincontri, xxi. 151; Bracelli, l. iv. f. m; Folieta, l. x. p. 226; Fazio, l. 7 (*Thes. Antiq. Ital.*, vol. ix. part 2, p. 101-104); Ammirato, xxii. 40; Mariana, l. xxi. c. 17, vol. ii. p. 447; Lecoy de la Marche, i. 214.

³ 180,000 crowns in twelve taxes. Ammirato, xxii. 40.

⁴ Cavalcanti, *Sec. Stor.*, c. 34, vol. ii. p. 213.

⁵ Simoneta, xxi. 322; Eugene's Bull., Flor., August 3, 1442; *Ann. Eccles.*, 1442, § 12, vol. xxviii. p. 396.

then broke it off. More than ever was Italy divided into two camps, and soon the two leagues tightened their bonds, the better to fight; on one side, the Pope, the Duke of Milan, and the King of Naples; on the other, Sforza, the Venetians, and the Florentines (November 30, 1442).¹

The best of it was that Eugene, henceforth the enemy of the Florentines, was living in their midst for the second time; he had been there since the Council, four years earlier.² René d'Anjou saw him at Florence on his return from Provence, when, disgusted with Italian egoism and faithless captains who treated him like a bale of goods,³ he forsook the kingdom that he had not been able to defend (July 16, 1442⁴). He wanted to say his say to the Pope, the chief instrument of his ruin, but he went back quietly enough. Could it be otherwise? Intimidated, he spoke humbly, and was content with soft words and a fresh investiture, which, according to a contemporary, was not worth the smallest army.⁵ Florence could do nothing for him but cover him with honours. She gave him the houses of the Bardi, and entertained him at the rate of twenty-five golden crowns a day. Humouring his passion for strange beasts, she presented him with a lioness. As he had been robbed of the golden cross lent him by the canons of San Lorenzo, she had a magnificent one made, and gave it him for his own.⁶ He left for Marseilles, September 22.⁷ In token of gratitude, he conceded the priors in office the right henceforth to add to their arms his own fleur-de-lis.⁸

¹ Simoneta, xxi. 318 *sq.*; Ammirato, xxii. 40; Ricotti, iii. 94.

² In chap. i. it was shown that he left Florence for Bologna in 1436. He lived there from June 23, 1434, and returned to the Council January 22, 1439.

³ "Disse che non voleva che il conte Francesco nè altri capitani italiani di ventura facessero mercanzia di lui" (*Giorn. Napol.*, xxi. 1127).

⁴ Simoneta, xxi. 323; Fazio, l. vii. (*Thes. Ant. Ital.*, vol. ix. part 3, p. 107).

⁵ *Giorn. Napol.*, xxi. 1125; Boninsegni, p. 76; *Ann. Eccles.*, 1442, § 12, xxviii. p. 396; Machiavelli, vi. 86 A; Ammirato, xxii. 40.

⁶ Lecoy de la Marche, i. 219; the document of September 7, 1442, is published by this author in Appendix, No. 18, vol. ii. p. 252.

⁷ Boninsegni, p. 76.

⁸ "Unum lilii florem, prout domus nostra portare consuevit et portat" (charter

Eugene himself shortly afterwards left Florence. Discontented with his hosts like everybody else, he pardoned Cosimo neither the maintenance of the proscription nor the murder—under his own eyes—of the uninteresting Baldaccio, still less his wish that Sforza should remain the lord of the Marches.¹ On his side, Cosimo as little relished the Pope's intention to visit Sienna, a hostile town. Both the governors of Florence and the orators of Venice represented to him that in doing so he would be giving himself bound hand and foot into the power of the King of Naples and the Duke of Milan, the neighbourhood of Rome being infested with untrustworthy soldiers.² Satirical verses were posted upon the walls of Santa Mari Novella, where he resided, informing him that at Sienna he would find war, ruin, blood, and fire; that it was madness to mistrust a faithful friend, or to take Piccinino for master; finally, that a good tailor measures seven times before cutting his cloth.³ These anonymous poets did not add their hidden thought, that, politics aside, their country drew glory and profit from the pontifical sojourn. Interest dictated their advice, as was soon seen. Eugene persisting in his intention, the Council deliberated an entire night—should they permit him to depart?⁴ Eugene wisely feigned to ignore their deliberations against his liberty; he solemnly consecrated the churches of Santa Croce and San Marco, and finally was able to leave, followed by his fifteen cardinals, and accompanied as far as Sienna by the Florentines amid great demonstrations of respect. Night had brought good counsel.⁵

taken from the Archives des Buondelmonti, recently given with others to the Archivio di Stato of Florence, and published in the *Arch. Stor.*, 1876, disp. 3, p. 532).

¹ G. Capponi, ii. 37.

² Boninsegni, p. 77; Ammirato, xxii. 41.

³ Verses published in the *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., xvi. part I, p. 526.

⁴ Night of the 6th and 7th January 1443. Cavalcanti, *Sec. Stor.*, c. 18, ii. p. 169; Vespasiano, *Vita di Agnolo Acciajuoli*, c. 7, and *Vita di Leonardo d'Arezzo*, c. 5, 6, in *Spicil. Rom.*, i. 467, 562. Vespasiano asserts that the idea of retaining the Pope came from Venice.

⁵ Ammirato, xxii. 41.

Once at Sienna, he removed the mask. Under pretence of a love of peace, he acknowledged what was done at Naples, and recognised Alphonsus of Aragon (April 9, 1443).¹ Later on, in spite of René's protest, he legitimatised Don Fernando, Alphonsus's natural son, to enable him to succeed.² It is easy to guess the price Alphonsus paid for this pontifical right-about-face: he expelled Sforza from the Marches, and established everywhere the supremacy of the Holy See, "to the great prejudice and shame of the Church of God,"³ as the Venetian Sanuto writes.

Venice condemned the agreement, and Florence was no less severe; but it was really not worth more than the military operations, and these were turning out badly for Sforza. At the approach of Piccinino and Alphonsus, Sforza's lieutenants in the Marches deserted, and the banners of the Church floated in the towns. Gold was never plentiful enough for these lieutenants. To appease them Sforza bled towns, wherein he had never lived, where he was hardly known, and where he had neither hereditary rights nor their equivalent, the right of long possession.⁴ The aid of the two Republics, which he demanded from his retreat in Romagna, was long in coming, while eighty thousand men, generalled by two able chiefs, were opposed to him. He might well have been lost, but events and the caprice of men saved him.

Suddenly, on June 6, 1443, the Bolognese repelled Piccinino, and, under the tyrannical rule of Annibale Bentivoglio, established their independence, which they called liberty. Supported by Venice and Florence, on the 14th of the following August they consolidated their work by the defeat of Alvisè del

¹ Bull dated from Sienna. Arch. of Naples, No. xxxiv. f. 8, in Lecoy de la Marche, i. 266.

² Bull of Rome, July 12, 1444. Arch. of Naples, No. xxxiv. f. 22, in Lecoy de la Marche, i. 267.

³ Marin Sanuto, xxii. 1108; Simoneta, xxi. 324; *Ann. Eccl.*, 1443, § 1, vol. xxviii. p. 400; Fazio, l. viii. (*Thes. Ant. Ital.*, vol. ix. part 3, p. 111).

⁴ Ammirato, xxii. 43; Ricotti, iii. 9.

Verme, a Milanese captain.¹ Piccinino was weakened thereby, Alphonsus and Filippo Maria were disconcerted. It was more than enough to force the latter into one of those changes of front that suited his natural mobility. Hitherto his policy had been to weaken Sforza without destroying him, that he might thus strengthen the exacting Piccinino and assist the increasing advancement of Alphonsus. The Count Francesco, on the full tide of prosperity, was reconciled with him; together they formed a secret league, into which the Venetians and Florentines were compelled to enter. The gain was entirely Sforza's. Living at Fano with his son-in-law, Sigismondo Malatesta, he was ready to go wherever his presence was needed.² Chance had turned: henceforth it was for the King of Naples to be on his guard; of the two condottieri, his enemy was the stronger, his friend the weaker. He dared not break with the Duke of Milan; the siege of Fano was difficult, and winter was approaching.³ Sforza gained the victories of Montelauro and Montolmo,⁴ Piccinino was taken prisoner,⁵ and peace was made. Trembling in Perouse, Eugene IV. accepted the mediation of the two Republics, and Cosimo de Medici and Neri Capponi were named arbitrators. Count Francesco had twelve days to recover his lost towns; this delay expired, he would retain

¹ Simoneta, xxi. 325-327; Neri Capponi, xviii. 1200; Sanuto, xxii. 1108; *Cron. Bol.*, xviii. 667-672; Boninsegni, p. 78; Platina, xx. 840; Burselli, xxiii. 879; Machiavelli, vi. 86 B; Ammirato, xxii. 42. See on these events the story of Galeazzo Marescotti or Marscotto, a great friend of Annibale Bentivoglio, *Cronica come Annibale Bentivogli fu preso e menato de prigione et poi morto et vendicato*, published at Bologna in 1869. See more particularly p. 52.

² G. B. Poggio, p. 171; Fr. Adami, *De rebus in civitate Firmana gestis fragmentorum Libri duo*, l. ii. c. 87, p. 104, Rome, 1591; Ammirato, xxii. 43. See work of M. Yriarte on Sigismondo Malatesti, published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, December 1, 1881.

³ Simoneta, xxi. 331; *Ann. Foroliv.*, xxii. 222; Fazio, l. viii. (*Thes. Ant. Ital.*, l. ix. part 3, p. 117); Machiavelli, vi. 86 B; Ammirato, xxii. 42-44.

⁴ Simoneta, xxi. 340-343; *Ann. Foroliv.*, xxii. 222; Sanuto, xxii. 1112; G. B. Poggio, p. 171; Fazio, l. viii. p. 125; Fr. Adami, l. ii. c. 97, p. 113; Machiavelli, vi. 87 B; Ammirato, xxii. 44; Ricotti, iii. 97.

⁵ The authors vary upon the date, from August 19, 1444, to the beginning of September. Simoneta, xxi. 355-357; *Ann. Foroliv.*, xxii. 222; Sanuto, xxii. 1114; *Ist. Bresc.*, xxi. 832; Ammirato, xxii. 45.

his possessions and conquests, and the fief and title of marquis; the rest of the Marches would return to the Church (September 30).¹ Only three towns held out after these twelve days, but they only escaped Sforza upon the condition of paying him in future the tribute they had paid in the past to the Apostolic Chamber.² The upstart peasant, the soldier of fortune, was now a great lord, almost a prince; he did not the less for that continue the trade of condottiere, nor cease to appreciate its profits. The treaty was only acknowledged on October 18;³ on the 30th he was engaged for three years in the pay of Florence and Venice, each of which allowed him 8500 florins in gold a month.⁴ Despite his exactions from his subjects, this was probably the best part of his income.

While he was a marquis and the possessor of vast estates, Piccinino, his rival, the most illustrious of condottieri, had not even a resting-place for his old age. What did it matter to this brave soldier that his contemporaries declared him superior to Agamemnon, to Cyrus, to Pyrrhus, to the most renowned Greeks and Romans! He might be praised for fighting for the love of glory, but he was tired of being paid in smoke. False modesty prompted him to call himself to his followers a worm of the earth, not worthy to be compared with the glorious heroes of antiquity.⁵ The mortification of blighted and broken ambition, added to the great and prolonged fatigues of his career, told upon his weakly constitution, and he soon died, September 8, 1444,⁶ leaving, in

¹ Doc. in Osio, vol. iii. No. 290, p. 312. The negotiations were already old: in the following month of March the Duke expressed a desire to be named commissioner of the two Republics. *Ibid.*, No. 272, p. 299.

² Simoneta, xxi. 361; Sanuto, xxii. 1115; Machiavelli, vi. 87 B; Ammirato, xxii. 45.

³ Osio, vol. iii. No. 268, p. 296, contains the Duke's letter ordering the publication of the league.

⁴ *Archivio Sforzesco*, Bibl. Nat., Orig., No. 1583, ff. 37-43.

⁵ Piccinino's letter to Giannozzo Manetti, in *Life of latter*, ed. Fanfani, p. 190, in G. Capponi, ii. 38 n.

⁶ G. B. Poggio, p. 172; Ammirato, xx. 45. Other authors give various dates for Piccinino's death, from September 8 to October 6.

spite of his sons, who inherited his traditions, the military faction of the *Braccaschi* for ever eclipsed by that of the *Sforzeschi*. Posterity judges him as Ricotti did: "No man of fine feeling will envy Sforza or Piccinino; but if I had to choose, I should prefer the unlucky adventurer to his rival turned lord."¹

But all was not plain sailing for this new-made lord. His notorious cruelty alienated the people from him, as his greediness did the princes. The Duke of Milan was vexed to see him invested so close to his own door with stable and effective power. Pretexts were not wanting to excite enemies against him, as well as against his constant allies, the Florentines. He had put to death his lieutenant, Zarpellone, the real conqueror of Montelauro, Piccinino's worthy successor.² He meant to swoop down, "like the hawk upon quail," upon all that he did not yet possess in the Marches, with the aid of Florence, Venice, and the French. He would end by expelling Alphonsus of Aragon from Calabria. It was thought better to obey a real king than to be exposed to the rule of "made" lords, who could not tell who their father was, or of communities led by shoemakers and tailors.³ Sforza and Florence, so openly described, were objects of the same distrust and hatred on the part of the Duke of Milan,⁴ and soon these

¹ Ricotti, iii. 104.

² Simoneta, xxi. 362; *Cron. Rim.*, xv. 950; Ricotti, iii. 105. The details of the war may be had in Sismondi, vi. 120-130, in Ricotti, and the other chroniclers.

³ "Meglio ne pare stare ad obedientia de une signore e Re naturale che sia con nuy quello che è questo par respecto de' beneficii et de le altre cosse, che stare a periculo de venire ad obedientia de comunitate o signorie in le quale siano calzolari, sertori et ogni altra sorte e specie de homini o vero de capitanei quali non sapiano ancora che sia stato suo padre" (Instructions of Ottino de Marliano, sent to the King of Aragon, November 9, 1445. *Arch. Sforzesco*, Orig., No. 1583, f. 51. The last lines of this document were printed in the Appendix of Buser, *Die Beziehungen der Mediceer zu Frankreich, &c.*, p. 352).

⁴ January 11, 1445, the Duke wrote that he knew of Florence's designs upon Piombino, and that if Cosimo would enter into relations with him, he would promise never to interfere in Tuscan affairs, except to aid them publicly and privately with his power and his wealth, offering desirable securities. See text in Osio, iii. No. 313, p. 358.

sentiments were shared by the Pope, the King of Naples, and even Sigismondo Malatesta, Sforza's son-in-law.

But Sforza cared not: he was upheld by Cosimo, his treasurer and adviser,¹ whom he overwhelmed with gross flattery.² Cosimo exhorted him to march upon Rome, where, he said, the barons, cardinals, and people awaited him as a liberator, and he boastfully promised to reduce the Pope to peace by fire and to work miracles.³ As a matter of fact, he did so little that his army of heavy cavalry was reduced for three days to live upon wild strawberries, and compelled to retreat without having gone beyond Montefiascone.⁴ The Florentine exchequer was behind-hand; the parsimony of the Council often impeded the fulfilment of its promises at the proper time, and the Pope, in order to detach this race of merchants from Sforza, had their mules seized laden with merchandise, only returning them upon payment; he also imprisoned in the castle of St. Angelo the ambassador, Bernardetto de Medici (August 1446), under the pretext of credit upon the *monte*, and would not release him without the sum of 5000 florins.⁵ This was the game of open war: if Florence could find gold to bribe the Pope's enemies, she ought to have first paid her debts to the Holy See.

These trials Cosimo endured philosophically; he dreaded a worse disaster, the downfall of Sforza, whose power seemed necessary to the equilibrium. He had risked all upon this card. Now Count Francesco, if he were lord in the centre of

¹ January 15, 1446, Sforza wrote to Antonio de Trivulcio that he had only to appear for the Council within three days to give him the money he needed (*Arch. Sforzesco*, cop. No. 1597, f. 66).

² "Ingenium perspicacissimum, intellectum magnifici viri Cosme Johannis de Medicis de Florentia qui summa rectitudine et diligentia accuratissime et prudentissime omnia que vult perficit ad effectum" (April 8, 1446, *Arch. Sforzesco*, Orig., No. 1583, f. 61).

³ Neri Capponi, xviii. 1201.

⁴ Simoneta, xxi. 376; *Cron. d'Agobbio*, xxi. 985. We repeat that the infinite and uninteresting details of this war are not to be found here.

⁵ Message of August 16, 1446, to the Florentine orator Donato in Fabroni, Doc., p. 170; Boninsegni, p. 81; Cavalcanti, *Sec. Storia*, c. 34, vol. ii. p. 212.

the peninsula, had lost everything in the kingdom of Naples and in the dominions of the Church. Filippo Maria had his eye upon Cremona and Pontremoli, pretending that these two places were not part of the dowry, and were only a provisional guarantee.¹ Venice held aloof, in spite of Florentine eloquence,² fearing beforehand this heir presumptive of the old Duke; the Council of Ten with difficulty granted 4000 horse for the army in Lombardy,³ while Cosimo was doing all in his power to engage in war.⁴ They, however, with this feeble contingent, and thanks to Michele Attendolo, their general, reaped all the glory of this campaign. They relieved Cremona; they seized the country between the Adda and the Oglio by an almost bloodless victory (September 28, 1446); they devastated the country nearly as far as Monza, while Count Francesco in Romagna had enough to do to hold his own before his enemies.⁵

Before this failure the Duke was simply insolent. Puccio Pucci, coming as messenger of peace, was refused an audience until an hour declared favourable by the astrologers. The ambassador did not wait for his country's victory to avenge this affront. When he was sent for, in turn he replied that he was not ready, and that the Duke's hour was not his (September 1).⁶ The Visconti's miseries were exposed by the turn of affairs; he was nearly blind, weakened, sick unto death.⁷ Hated by his subjects, preoccupied by the thought of his suc-

¹ Sanuto, xxii. 1121; *Ist. Bresc.*, xxi. 834.

² Neri Capponi, in October 1445; Neri Capponi and Bernardo Giugni, from May to July 1446.

³ Neri Capponi, xviii. 1201; G. Capponi, ii. 40 and n. 2; Ricotti, iii. 187; Sismondi, vi. 133.

⁴ April 27, 1446, Cosimo exhorted Sforza to begin the campaign immediately: "Reusciendo vi dà et la Marcha et la Romagna, et anchora rompe la intelligenza del Re et del Ducha. Chredo la signoria vostra farà più al presente con cinque che de qui a uno mese con dieci." Text in Osio, iii. No. 342, p. 401.

⁵ Osio, iii. No. 365, p. 440; Simoneta, xxi. 382-385; *Ist. Bresc.*, xxi. 836-838; Sanuto, xxii. 1121; *Cron. d'Agobbio*, xxi. 986; Ammirato, xxii. 51; Sismondi, vi. 135; Ricotti, iii. 108; Cipolla, p. 422.

⁶ Ammirato, xxii. 51.

⁷ One of Sforza's ambassadors, Angelo Simoneta, writes to him from Vienna, September 30, 1446, "Dubito de la morte de lo duca de Milano, la quale predicono tutti li indicii" (*Arch. Sforz.*, orig., No. 1583, f. 91).

cessors, abandoned by Charles VII. of France and Alphonsus of Naples, who made no reply to his prayer for help, he had nothing else to do but grasp his son-in-law's hand and promise not to disinherit him.¹ But was it possible to rely on such a turncoat? He persuaded the Pope and Alphonsus to plead with Sforza for him, and the latter humoured the dying man to the extent of advancing his old enemy 40,000 ducats.²

Still Sforza hesitated. His perplexities were great. To break with his father-in-law meant the loss of his chances of inheritance; to unite with him was to renounce the support of Florence and Venice, and consequently to be at their mercy. On the other hand, to second the Venetians involved the risk of losing Lombardy; and could he hope to win it back from them afterwards? One of his confidants urged him to join them if he did not wish to be despoiled; and Parma already was at his disposal.³ We are told that in his difficulties he applied to Cosimo for advice. Cosimo is painted as false even in friendship, and so cautious that he shrank from saying what he wanted others to know of his thoughts or objects, but delivered it by a third person. He usually employed Nicodemo Tranchedini de Pontremoli, Sforza's orator in his own house.⁴ The advice of his old ally to Sforza was to follow his own interest, and not trouble himself about two Republics which had only helped him because it suited themselves. By

¹ Simoneta, xxi. 385; Machiavelli, vi. 88 B; Sismondi, vi. 137; G. Capponi, ii. 40.

² Neri Capponi, xviii. 1202.

³ "Essendo la S. V. lontana, ve poresti lavare le mani et tutto quello stato capitaria in altre mani . . . certificando la S. V. che venendo haveriti Parma. Perchè da uno de li principali de quela città io fui richiesto che sollicitasse la S. V. al venire colà" (Angelo Simoneta, Venice, September 30, 1446; *Arch. Sforz.*, Orig., No. 1583, f. 91).

⁴ "Cosmus explicare quid in animo haberet aperte non ausus, sententiamque ambiguis verbis involvens, ita per Nicodemum Pontremulensem referri jubet" (Giov. Simoneta, xxi. 388). Sforza had three secretaries of the name and family of Simoneta: Angiolo in 1426, and in 1433 his two nephews, Cecco, *secretarius a secretis*, and Giovanni, *secretarius ab epistolis*, that is, chancellor. See Muratori's preface to Giovanni Simoneta, xxi. 168.

this he directly incited him to disregard Venice, whose ambition was irreconcilable with his. When we add that he recommended him to satisfy the soldiers by giving up Pesaro, the only town that remained faithful, to pillage, the remark of Giovanni Simoneta, Sforza's secretary, is easily intelligible: "Wicked counsel, rejected by Count Francesco, astonished to find such execrable inhumanity in such a man."¹ Sforza and his people treating Cosimo as a savage! What a light thrown upon this pretended father of his country!

At bottom his desire was not Sforza's good, but the ruin of Venice, now the object of his personal rancour and his political apprehension. More than once wounded in his self-love, since Venice had usurped a first rank in the league, Florentine greed having left her two-thirds of the expenses, he feared, like the other Italian powers, this increasing ambition, fostered by cold energy and mysterious silence. For the moment she only aspired to Lombardy, but later would she not want all Italy? The political conception of Cosimo was to restrain Venice within her limits by the establishment of a strong power at Milan. He perhaps forgot that Sforza's fidelity claimed an increasing salary; that this upstart was insatiable in his thirst and need of money;² that the day might come when the Florentines would close their purses to him, and that in any case his successor, if not himself, could very well find other friends. But politics are not fashioned for eternity.³

The politics of that time were purely speculative. Sforza was yet weighing the pros and cons. He doubted the sincerity

¹ Simoneta, xxi. 388.

² Complaints of not receiving enough money, and demands for more, are constant in the numerous volumes of the Archivio Sforzesco, and are terribly monotonous. In one of these begging letters are these curious words: "Bixogna faciate a la mercadantescha, che rare volte famo gran guadagno senza el gran pericolo" (Nicodemo, Boccaccino et Contuzo to Sforza, November 25, 1446, Orig., No. 1583, p. 127).

³ Guicciardini (*Stor. di Fir., Op. ined.*, iii. p. 8, 9) believes that an alliance between Sforza and Cosimo meant the salvation of Italy, whose worst enemy was the Venetians. Machiavelli also holds this opinion; see his letters on affairs.

of Cosimo's friendly demonstrations, and still more the stability of his occult power. He learnt that many intrigues were necessary another year to place the chief of the Medici among those officers of the *monte* who manipulated without control the public funds.¹ Cosimo explained to Nicodemo that he only desired to retain this office that he might supply the pecuniary needs of his ally as well as his own;² but he also said that he dared not "force the people," not wishing to lose his head.³ This was his invariable excuse when he was not in a mood to advance money, and for the moment he was indisposed to compromise himself. He recommended Sforza to proclaim aloud that the Duke's enormous cake could not be eaten unless a good slice were given to the Venetians.⁴ We can see that "he wished to diminish the expenditure of his country, feeling certain that his condottiere was inalterably his."⁵

Suspicion was thus legitimate and hesitation explicable. An error on the part of Venice brought it to an end. Until then, Venice had defended Cremona against the Duke of Milan, it being a sort of boulevard for her states upon *terra firma*; but hearing of the pending negotiations between father and son-in-law, she mistook fear for reality, and believed the still

¹ "Et è stato difficilissimo a venderla" (Boccaccino and Nicodemo to Sforza, October 22, 1446, *Arch. Sforz.*, Orig., No. 1583, f. 104; and Buser, Append., p. 352).

² "Et pur Cosimo quando ce fece durare tanta fatica a farlo refermar al monte, ce dicitia farlo solamente perchè ritrovandosse in quel officio potia sempre soccorrervi ad omne vostro bixogno et assicurarsi de assignamenti luy estesso" (Nicodemo to Sforza, November 25, 1446, in cipher, *Arch. Sforz.*, Orig., No. 1583, f. 133).

³ "Fariavi omne bene, ma pur non vene voria sforzare questo populo. Et dice che seriano tute cose da farli mazare el cappo" (*ibid.*). In the Copies, No. 1597, f. 150, the passages in cipher in the original were written out.

⁴ "Et ha voluto Cosimo che de verun altra cosa se participi el vero con persona . . . et ad chi ce strengesse un poco più, dichiatio che serate de parere, poy che la torta del duca è grande, che la non se dovesse mangiare che costoro non ne havessero una bona parte et nuy qualche particella per ristoro" (Copies, *ibid.*, f. 150).

⁵ "Et forsi quando potesse liberare questo populo de la spesa vostra, gli pareria fare un bel facto, et maxime che gli pare essere certo habiate sempre ad essere suo" (*ibid.*).

doubtful agreement concluded; and in order that what she regarded as her own rampart should not become her neighbour's safeguard, she endeavoured to seize it by treason.¹ Without further waiting, Sforza accepted from Filippo Maria the same pay that he received from the league—204,000 florins in gold a year—with supreme authority over all the soldiers and fortified positions of the duchy. These positions were stated in the treaty; Milan was not among them (November 10, 1446).²

Thus assured of the present and the future, Sforza did not cease therefor to hold out to Cosimo the hand of an armed beggar; "he could not," he said, "go to sea without biscuits."³ He had devoted himself to the league with more faith and love than Christ or St. John the Baptist. He had mortified the flesh, yet he made no complaint. He had lost his fine states, impoverished his company and himself until there was nothing left, and even the possessions of his wife, Madonna Bianca, were pledged, while she and her children were in a state of shameful poverty.⁴ He flattered Cosimo by saying that he expected from him more than the advice and assistance his father would have given him were he alive.⁵ He wished to be the son and servant of the commons of Florence; he and his friends were both soul and body, so long as they lived, and more in the future than in the past. Dying, he would lay his curse upon his children if such were not their pleasure also.⁶

¹ Simoneta, xxi. 389; *Ist. Bresc.*, xxi. 839; Ricotti, iii. 110; Sismondi, vi. 141.

² Simoneta, xxi. 391. See the instrument in Du Mont, *Corps Diplom.*, vol. iii. part I, p. 155.

³ "Non faria per vui intrare in nave senza biscotto." It was said: "Che saria impossibile havessino omne cosa cossi ad votum, che ad quel modo luy et ognuno saperia vincere" (Boccaccino and Nicodemo to Sforza, November 25, 1446. Copies, No. 1597, f. 148). In the following December, in one of his letters, Sforza repeats the metaphor of going to sea without biscuits (*ibid.*, f. 158).

⁴ Sforza to Boccaccino and Nicodemo, Pesaro, December 7, 1446 (Copies, No. 1597, f. 164).

⁵ Another letter from the same to the same, and same date (*ibid.*, f. 166). These two letters are very curious.

⁶ From the same to the same, March 12, 1447. (Copies, No. 1598, f. 42, and in Buser, *Append.*, p. 355.)

What meanness underlies these eternal demands for money! Worse still, Sforza was an unconscionable liar, and actually defended himself against the charge before Cosimo and his own ambassadors: "I have not been untrue to you. If you find that I have not spoken the truth, never trust me more. To convince yourself, send Diotesalvi."¹ A child or a school-boy taken to task and punished would perhaps have preserved his dignity better.

But in this century of lies and perjury, when none could trust his fellow, it would have been unreasonable to hope to inspire others with confidence. Men wrote of the promises of yesterday as if no promises had been made. At Florence they produced "a great Florentine *busbu*." No one knew what to think of the movements of the troops; they felt their way, doubting the ambition of this condottiere who would not be satisfied with being king of Italy.² Twenty days after the treaty concluded between father and son-in-law, the latter deliberated again with his allies whether he should make peace with Venice or war with the Duke in Parma, relying upon the two Republics, or yet if he would pay off the old man in case he should have the means of doing so. This was Cosimo's advice, but only his advice,³ and under any circumstances, to avoid mistrust, it was urgent to decide at once.⁴

However, the rascal Filippo Maria had no right to complain; on his side, he was privately scheming the intervention of the Dauphin of France, to whom he was ready to

¹ "Et non credate che io usci queste parole in arte alcuna con voi. Et quando trovate che io ve dica boscia, io son contento che non mi crediate mai più cosa alcuna. . . . Et perchè cognoschati che se io ve dico il vero o non, io ve prego che voi mandiate per mia compare Diotesalvi" (April 27, 1453, to Cosimo. Copies, No. 1602, f. 64). "Io ve ho dicto come le cose sonno passate et passano de qua, et dictove el vero" (December 7, 1446, to Nicodemo, *ibid.*, No. 1597, f. 164).

² Nicodemo to Sforza, November 28, 1446. Orig., No. 1583, p. 135.

³ "Cosimo solo è in opinione de lassar andare el conte a la via del duca" (Nicodemo to Sforza, November 30, 1446., *ibid.*, f. 143).

⁴ Nicod. and Bocc. to Sforza, November 29, 1446, Orig., No. 1583, f. 130.

resign Genoa,¹ and soon this was no better than the secret of the comedy. On the 9th February 1447 the Florentine Signory even warned the Council of Ten at Venice that a squire of Charles VII., passing through Florence on his way to Rome, had confessed to "a few important citizens"—that is, to Cosimo—that the Dauphin had entered into a league and convention with the Duke, who had promised him the inheritance of his duchy, had already given up to him Asti, Novi, Gavi, and all the castles of Genoa, and had agreed to assist in the conquest of this town—a conquest already in view, for 2000 horse had crossed the Alps, and were on their way to Asti. In return, the Dauphin promised to defend his ally against everybody but Florence and Sforza, and to bring him 5000 horse² in the spring. It is true these propositions were not trustworthy; they were even contradictory. How could the Dauphin engage himself not to fight Sforza if he despoiled him? We miss the keenness of the Visconti; he gave all and obtained nothing. Was it hatred of his son-in-law or the spirit of vengeance? Perhaps the latter; but the vengeance of a sick and dying man.

On the 13th August 1447 fever and dysentery carried off this hideous giant, as obese in age as he had been spare in youth, filthy, sombre, taciturn, and false, distrusting himself as much as others, profitlessly clever and quarrelsome, a traitor to everybody, and, in spite of this, not himself betrayed by his condottieri. By his irreligion he belonged to his own time, by his absurd superstition to the Middle Ages. He was only praised by Filelfo, who sold his eulogy,³ and the sole feeling expressed by his subjects at his modest funeral

¹ "Li Francesi cercano con ogni via de havere Zenoa et siamo quasi cerit che stando le cose come le stano, la gli capitarà in le mane" (The Duke to Sforza, December 31, 1446, *ibid.*, f. 159).

² Letter of the Signory, published by Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 178, and reproduced by Desjardins because of its importance, i. 59.

³ Simoneta, xxi. 395-397; *Cron. Bol.*, xviii. 684; Sanuto, xxii. 1126; Ammirato, xxii. 54.

was joy.¹ A few courtiers had forced him in the throes of agony to sign a codicil leaving his states to the King of Aragon, without any mention of Bianca or Sforza or the Dauphin, and charging three trustees to give up the fortresses to him.²

This codicil *in extremis* was believed fictitious by those who did not see it. Others regarded it as valueless, and quoted the saying attributed to Filippo Maria when implored to name his successor, that he was quite satisfied that his death should cause confusion.³ He had done his best to bring about these fine results, but circumstances were against him; they simplified the situation he wished to complicate. The death of Eugene IV. had deprived Alphonsus of a friend, rid Sforza and Cosimo, whose alliance he upset, of an enemy. For a moment the two allies dreaded that the new Pope might be worse, but they were soon enough reassured.⁴

In fact, the choice of the conclave had fallen (March 6) on Tommaso Parentucelli, a citizen of Sarzana, but a Florentine at heart.⁵ The son of a poor doctor of Pisa, he had to earn his bread in Florence before finishing his studies at Bologna by giving lessons to the sons of Rinaldo des Albizzi and of Palla Strozzi.⁶ Later, he returned to this town in the train

¹ Niccola Guarno à Sforza, August 14, 1447, Orig., No. 1584, f. 239. Many messages to this ambassador show us the progress of disease, and the events that marked it. *Ibid.*, f. 228-237.

² Guarna to Sforza, 13th and 14th August 1447, Orig., No. 1584, f. 237. 239. The more recent writers, amongst others, M. Cipolla (p. 427) only speak hypothetically of the Duke's decision to name Alphonsus as his successor. Guarna's letter fully confirms the testimony of Candido Decembrio (R. I. S., xx. 1020), and of Fazio (p. 142). M. Cipolla gives other texts besides, which seem trustworthy.

³ Simoneta, xxi. 397.

⁴ Ammirato, xxii. 53. "Ha pur voluto (Eugene IV.) fare coma diceva la S. V., cioè morire per farve male, non solamente vivendo, ma etiamdio morendo" (Marlino des Barbavari to Sforza, February 27, 1447, Orig., No. 1584, f. 48).

⁵ See *Oratio Aeneæ Sylvii de Creatione Nicolai V.*, R. I. S., iii. part 2, p. 894; Sismondi (vi. 268) from this author reports the circumstances of the election, perfectly honourable for the elected.

⁶ *Commentario della vita di papa Niccola, composto da Vespasiano*, R. I. S., xxv. 270; Sforza, *La Patria, la famiglia e la giovinezza di Niccolò V.* in *Rivista Storica Italiana*, Ann. 1, fasc. 2, April-June 1884.

of Cardinal Niccola Albergati, whom he served twenty years as steward, secretary, and doctor,¹ and whose name he took in gratitude with the tiara. During this second stay, Tommaso de Sarzana, as he was called, always mixed with learned men,² and recognisable in his blue robe and priest's cap, discussed each morning the gravest questions in a corner of the palace. Cosimo profited by his advice in establishing the libraries which he gave to Florence.³ He became pope when he had been cardinal hardly a year, and made Cosimo correspondent and banker, an office Cosimo's father, Giovanni de Bicci, had discharged under Martin V.,⁴ but with less intimate sympathy than his son. The friend of peace, he was represented at the conference of Ferrara by a member of the Sacred College, where Neri Capponi and Bernardo Giugni represented their country,⁵ when everything was interrupted by the death of the Duke of Milan, and the position again rendered debateable.

In spite of his testaments, or rather because of them, since they were contradictory, his succession was undecided. If the Salic law were ignored, the pretensions of Charles of Orleans, son of Valentine Visconti, and consequently nephew of the deceased, were plausible.⁶ Sforza urged the rights of his

¹ *Commentario*, &c., p. 271, and *Vita di Nic. V. a Janotto Manetto*, R. I. S., iii. part 2, p. 915.

² See their names in Vespasiano, *ibid.*, and in Sismondi, vi. 265.

³ Vespasiano, *ibid.*, p. 271, 274.

⁴ Scarcely elected, Nicholas said to Vespasiano: "Tu sai quanti benefizi m'ha fatto Cosimo de' Medici ne' mia bisogni, e però ne lo voglio remunerare; domattina lo farò mio depositario" (Vespasiano, *Vita di Nicola V.*, c. 19, in *Spicil. Rom.*, i. 42). "Il papa ama cordialissimamente Cosimo. Sono certo tuot remeterebbe in lui, perchè da ora dice non essere huomo al mondo di chui tanto si fidasse quanto di lui" (Roberto des Martelli to Sforza, Rome, March 8, 1447, in Osio, iii. 488, No. 393). See G. Amati on Giovanni de Bicci, Martin V.'s banker, *Notizie di alcuni manoscritti dell' Archivio secreto Vaticano*, in *Arch. Stor.*, 3rd ser., iii. part I, p. 199.

⁵ G. Capponi (ii. 42) quotes their instructions, dated July 28, 1447.

⁶ Philip of Burgundy's letter, dated from Brussels, September 28, 1447, and addressed to Sforza, aims at ruining these pretensions. A phrase from it is quoted by M. Fr. Bartolini from the Archives of Milan, *Arch. Stor.*, n. ser., xv. part 2, p. 31, n. I. M. Desjardins (i. 62) shows a letter from the same (January 7, 1448), claiming the services of Florence with the people of Milan in favour of Duke Charles of Orleans. It is deceitful enough, if this is no error.

wife, recalling the fact that many bastards had succeeded their fathers.¹ The Duke of Savoy, Filippo Maria's brother-in-law, held himself to be an acceptable candidate, and one of Sforza's servants wrote to him that Venice would have liked to enrich herself by Milan, "the first state of Italy."² Finally, the Milanese claimed their right to a voice in the matter; already they had taken their stand, shouted "Liberty," elected four citizens to the government, occupied gates and fortresses, enrolled captains, written to Venice and Florence to inform them of their intention to live in freedom.³ It was everywhere said that nearly three centuries before, at the Peace of Constance, Milan had obtained the right of self-government; that she had delegated it to the Visconti, but that, now that the Visconti were extinct, she recovered it, the government of women, above all, of bastards, being null. Their learned lawyer, Bartolommeo Morone, was of this opinion: the dynasty extinct, it was the hour for the Republic.⁴

The misfortune was that the Milanese were not unanimous. The nobles who occupied the castle deemed "the pie large enough" for Alphonsus and Sforza each to have a good slice. The greater number were for the King exclusively, while a few regarded the condottiere as the defender of freedom,⁵ or even as vicar with a slice of the pie.⁶ Division soon reached the partisans of liberty: the Trivulzi were Guelphs, and for war; the Lampugnani and the Bossi were Ghibelines, and for peace; the former leaning to Sforza, the latter to Piccinini.⁷ It was,

¹ Sismondi, vi. 150.

² "Questo è lo primo stato de Italia" (Antonio Guidoboni to Sforza, September 8, 1447, Orig., No. 1584, f. 298).

³ Nic. Guarna to Sforza, August 14, 1447, Orig., No. 1584, f. 239.

⁴ Leo, l. vi. c. 3, vol. ii. p. 704.

⁵ Nic. Guarna to Sforza, *loc. cit.*, and August 19, ff. 244, 247; Ant. Guidoboni to Sforza, September 12, 1447, Orig., No. 1584, f. 305; Sismondi, vi. 153.

⁶ "Chiamare la S. V. par loro defensore et alcuni dicono per vicario, con dire che ve feranno tale parte de questa torta che meritamente vene potrete contentare" Nic. Guarna, August 13, 1447, Orig., No. 1584, f. 237). See number of letters and notes on the towns and fortresses ready to be delivered to Sforza, *ibid.*, f. 255-298.

⁷ Ricotti, ii. 126.

in fact, late in the day to speak of freedom after so many years of slavery. An aristocratic republic, the only one possible to a town that had known no other, was hardly feasible with an upper class leaning to court life; in any case it could only have been a municipality, as the loss of the Milanese towns had greatly diminished the value of free institutions. "All was disorder, rapine, and murder,"¹ wrote the secretary Simoneta. His master, Sforza, contributed a large share. In coming down upon Pavia for his sureties,² he doubled the adherents of the King of Naples,³ who brought Sigismond of Austria from the north, with all his available troops, and advancing southward, feigned friendship and pretended to desire an understanding with his rival, whom he treated like a son.⁴

But the Milanese treated him as an enemy. They threatened him, if he refused to give up Pavia, to ally themselves with Genoa, Florence, and Venice.⁵ This alliance was, in fact, their trump card. An aristocratic republic would find support in the Genoese, the Venetians, and even the Florentines, who, under Cosimo, as under the Albizzi, were in no way a democracy. Reunited, these four states could extend their common ideas to the north, relegate Alphonsus to the south, and reduce Sforza to helplessness.⁶ But Venice was wanting

¹ Simoneta, xxi. 399.

² "Il consiglio è molto desdignato cum voi perchè avete tolto Pavia" (Ant. Guidoboni to Sforza, September 12, 1447, Orig., No. 1584, f. 305).

³ "È Desiderato e chiamato qui da una gran parte" (*ibid.*). Pavia acknowledged Sforza as Count, October 17. See Cipolla, p. 429.

⁴ "È ligere cossa che siati Re de Lombardia, perchè lo dito Re di Ragona haverà caro intendersi cum la S. V. et haverla per fiolo" (Guidoboni to Sforza, *loc. cit.*). Even before being sure of the Duke's death, August 21, Alphonsus wrote Sforza to continue his march upon Milan (Orig., No. 1584, f. 254).

⁵ Ant. Guidoboni to Sforza, September 12, 1447, *ibid.*, f. 305.

⁶ In all the documents upon Sforza's conquest of Milan published in the *Archiv für Kunde österreichischer Geschichts-Quellen*, September 1855, there is only one letter addressed to him (by Fiesco, Rapallo, July 10, 1448), in the first year in which he was called "princeps et excellentissimus Dominus Dux mediolanensis." See in the *Arch. Stor.*, n. ser., xv. part 2, p. 31, n. 2, M. Fr. Bertolini's work entitled, *Il conquisto di Milano per Fr. Sforza dietro i documenti raccolti dal Sichel.*

in her usual foresight. She persisted in seeing in Milan, even free, an enemy, an obstacle to her ambition, a pernicious example for her people; and desiring her enslavement, she inspired her anew with the wish for a monarch clever enough not to make his yoke felt at first.¹

At Florence two policies were in view: that of Neri Capponi and that of Cosimo. Neri Capponi was of the old school; he believed it possible to uphold the free institutions of Milan, and he did not share the general distrust of ambitious Venice. Two republican rivals in Lombardy, obliged to claim the support of Florence, appeared to him, and not unreasonably, a guarantee of his country's power. And if Milan could not be maintained in freedom, he preferred to see Venice share the spoils than furnish Sforza with means for its conquest, convinced as he was that Milan at bay would yield to the redoubtable queen of the Lagunes, who would then possess, not a share, but all. His prophecy here was quite wrong, as we shall shortly see.

Cosimo was much more clear-sighted. He hoped to see all the states of Italy equal in power.² His personal rancour towards Venice agreed with the feeling of the majority, who dreaded the territorial invasions of this maritime power. His old friendship for Sforza, if he succeeded in placing the ducal crown upon his head, would present the strongest rampart to Venice, behind which Florence could breathe at ease, and Cosimo establish himself firmly.³ Between Sforza and Venice, it was Venice he feared, for already upon land she balanced Florence, and greatly surpassed her on sea by her large and wealthy traffic. On the contrary, Sforza, separated from his possessions by a narrow thread of water, and the eternal enemy

¹ Ricotti, iii. 118; Sismondi, vi. 156.

² "Riducere le potenze d'Italia a quella equalità che le ridusse" (Vespasiano, *Vita di Cosimo*, c. 30, in *Spicil. Rom.*, i. 354).

³ Michele Bruto, Cosimo's enemy, shows the object of his policy which was to establish a strong power at Milan, able to keep up with Venice. See l. i. p. 62, 65.

of this eternal conqueror, would always be too well checked to round upon his old ally, and sure to seek his support. It was necessary, therefore, that Sforza should direct all his forces against Venice, and make peace with the other states. These were Cosimo's orders delivered by Nicodemo Tranchedini.¹

Objections were not wanting. Some of them were feeble. Milan, it was said, was a traditional enemy. This was true when the Visconti reigned, and when Venice neither had the strength nor the appetite to gobble up her neighbours; but yesterday's truth is often to-morrow's error. There were some strong arguments too. From the sentimental point of view, should a living republic prevent a dead republic from rising again to life? And from the point of view of interest, why so desperately fear a state irresistibly turned seaward? Once an understanding were possible, it would be wise to abstain from a rivalry with Venice in ships and colonies. But if this were the opinion of the greater number, Cosimo's influence, each day more marked and more despotic,² soon brought them round to his way of thinking.³

For the moment there were but idle discussions. Cosimo could only help Sforza with advice, for Florence had to defend herself against Alphonsus. With this object she even sent Antonio Pazzi to King René to invite him to revive his pretensions to the kingdom.⁴ While Filippo Maria yet lived, perhaps in agreement with him,⁵ Alphonsus of Aragon was

¹ "Nicodemo, io voria ch'el conte attendesse bene ad fare una sola cosa, et questa è l'impresa che piglia in Lombardia, et lassassi stare omne altra particolarità, imperhochè Venetiani serano subito in ordine et hanno gente assayssimo, et sono apti ad fare male al duca, non andando presto el conte, et pur la via è longha" (Cosimo's words to Nicodemo, reported by the latter, dep. of April 22, 1447, in Osio, iii. 537, No. 424).

² "Cognosco la natura de Cosimo che vole che tutti li cappigratii siano soy, et vole mostrar finalmente venire da se et non essere tirato" (Nicodemo to Sforza, May 26, 1453, Orig., No. 1586, f. 209).

³ The proof lies in the joy the Florentines exhibited after Sforza's success. See Ammirato, xxii. 63.

⁴ Letter of November 12, 1447, indicated by Desjardins, i. 61.

⁵ Machiavelli says this (vi. 89 B) and the codicil *in extremis* makes it very probable.

gaining solid possessions in the centre of the peninsula. He wanted to assure communication with the north, and he yielded to the necessity—always the weakness of the Neapolitan state—of defending it nowhere else than beyond the frontier. Deprived of his precious ally, Eugene IV., by the vacancy of the pontifical throne, he had come to stay at Tivoli, to profit by the movements he anticipated in Rome.¹ Deceived in his hope, while the negotiations for peace were going on at Ferrara, he seized the little fortress of Cennina (August 9), which opened to him the entrance to Tuscany by the valley of the Upper Arno. Having lost it fifteen days later, in the beginning of September he went with 15,000 men towards Montepulciano. He solicited the alliance of Sienna, which only gave him provisions,² and he continued to make pacific protestations. To the questions of the disquieted Florentines regarding his forward march, he replied that his sole motive was their league with Venice. Was not Venice continuing the war in spite of the five years' truce concluded at Ferrara, and was the truce of Ferrara not valid because the ratification of the late Duke of Milan was wanting?³ Put an end to this league, and the Florentines would find a friend in the King of Naples. But either through distrust of his sincerity or the difficulty of breaking with Venice,⁴ the reply was slow in coming, and he occupied several of the castles of Volterra,⁵ and then took up his winter quarters in the Siennese territories, near the ancient Populonia (January 1448).

¹ Written instructions to Neri Capponi and Bernardo Giugni. Letters of the 7th and 9th August 1447, indicated by G. Capponi, ii. 42. Cf. Machiavelli, vi. 89 B.

² Machiavelli, vi. 89 B. On November 4, 1447, the commons of Florence thanked that of Sienna for their resistance to the forces of Alphonsus. Doc. at the end of the *Vita del Re Alf. d'Aragona*, by Vespasiano; *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser. iv. part 1, p. 417. These official thanks did not prevent Boninsegni (p. 83) from complaining strongly of the Siennese on the subject of this affair.

³ Machiavelli, vi. 89 B.

⁴ Ammirato, xxii. 55.

⁵ Letter of the Signory to Alessandro des Alessandri, captain of Pisa, November 11, 1447. Doc. at the end of the *Vita del Re Alf. d'Aragona*, by Vespasiano; *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser. iv. part 1, p. 418. Letter addressed to Florence by Sforza, November 3, 1447, Orig., No. 1584, f. 377.

There, upon the seaside, he was only three miles from Piombino, a little village of which the Appiani, in a desert land, had made a stronghold, always envied by the Florentines.¹ To escape their too neighbourly clutch, Manuello d'Appiano, who regarded himself as the legitimate heir of the lords of his name,² pressed Alphonsus to seize Piombino, convinced he would continue to reign as heretofore under a distant master. This for the king would have been a valuable halting-place on the road to Lombardy.³ But the actual heiress was Caterina, Manuello's niece, who was advised by her husband, Rinaldo Orsini. These two at first begged help from Sienna, which had taken charge of their town. The result was only two or three hundred soldiers;⁴ so they looked solely to Florence for support. If previously they had had difficulties with her, the example of the Counts of Poppi was useful to them. As a token of goodwill they refused provisions to the Neapolitans, whence the siege of Piombino (May 1448).⁵

Ready to uphold these willing subjects, and seeing her own territory invaded, Florence named the Ten of *balie*, and, having raised an army, took into her pay the lesser nobles, Federigo de Montefeltro, Count of Urbino, and Sigismondo Malatesta, formerly enemies, now reconciled. Towards the end of June she granted Rinaldo Orsini 1500 florins a month, 400

¹ See above, p. 73, note 4.

² Since the death of his brother Gherardi, like him, son of Jacopo I. d'Appiano, but who had left the principality to his widow, Donna Pavola or Paola Colonna, from whom it passed in 1445, upon the advice of her Council, to her daughter Caterina, married to Rinaldo Orsini. See Cesaretti, *Istoria del Principato di Piombino*, i. 154, 166, c. 8 and 10, and ii. 1 sq. c. 1, Flor., 1789. The genealogical tree is at the end of the volume.

³ G. Capponi (ii. 42) believes that the possession of Piombino was at the bottom of all the war. It was only a means, as Cennina had been.

⁴ Malavolti, part ii. l. 2, f. 35 r^o.

⁵ Boninsegni, p. 86; Neri Capponi, xviii. 1204; Poggio, xx. 422; Fazio, l. ix. p. 146; Machiavelli, vi. 90 A; *Istoria dell' Assedio di Piombino*, poem by Antonio des Agostini, R. I. S., xxv. 321-324. Born at San Miniato, this poet was at Rinaldo's court during the siege, a sort of troubador courtier, who would be more useful if he had not drowned curious details in a deluge of invocations, speeches, and comparisons after the ancient fashion.

foot-soldiers, ten galleys, and six smaller vessels.¹ Her chief concern was the defence of her own cause, included in his. It was a miserable affair, as usual in those times. If fighting took place on sea, it was not through a wish to fight. Four Florentine galleys, bringing men, powder, and lead to Piombino (July 8), were taken or dispersed by the Neapolitan galleys, already mistress of the island of Giglio (July 15).² The inhabitants of Piombino looked on at this battle of chance from the top of their walls, and both armies were gathered upon the hills that encircle the town and overlook the sea like an amphitheatre. But the spirit of war was not excited; Alphonsus only thought of hunting, and asked passports for his falconers. Neri Capponi, chief of the Florentines, refused, because, as he said, it was not a question of shooting partridges;³ then, after this proud retort, he cleared the space, and went off upon the pretext of winning back the castles lost the previous year. He did not fear pursuit, and he was not pursued; the Neapolitan troops had no wine. This people of the south, to-day so sober, in those days believed a tonic necessary in the hot season. In order to fight they had to feel comfortable. One would have said they were English.

Between men so little inclined for arms negotiations are swiftly concluded, unless they are deliberately delayed. Bernardetto de Medici brought from the royal camp Alphonsus' conditions, the first of which was the concession of Piombino. Many Florentines yielded. Neri rushed from the army to point out the dangers of this resolution, and in fact of any resolution. According to him, it was a lighted brand, sure to burn the hand, however grasped. War would bring about famine and confusion; peace, giving the King a footing in Tuscany by the possession of Piombino, would permit him to attack Pisa, ever hostile, by land as well as by sea. Doubt-

¹ Cesaretti, vol. ii. p. 8, c. 1; Neri Capponi, xviii. 1206.

² Neri Capponi, xviii. 1205; Boninsegni, p. 86; Fazio, l. ix. p. 148; Ant. des Agostini, part 3, c. 3, xxv. 339; Machiavelli, vi. 90 A; Ammirato, xxii. 58.

³ Neri Capponi, xviii. 1205.

less the Florentines found the brand less fiery on one side than the other, since twenty-eight out of thirty-seven decided that peace should not be concluded if the lord of Piombino had to pay for it.

The siege continued,¹ but in this torrid weather fever carried off the besiegers, and the approach was announced of Taddeo des Manfredi of Faenza, whom the Republic had taken into its pay. A few squadrons were mistaken by the Neapolitan for an entire army; Taddeo retired to his kingdom, threatening to reappear in the spring. The spring came, but he did not show himself, and the year 1449 was without any war in Tuscany.²

In Lombardy, on the contrary, hostilities were carried on. Alphonso feared no malaria there, whither grave interests called him. The Venetians confessed to the Florentines their wish to possess these rich plains,³ and, if compelled to renounce them, were ready to support the claims of the Duke of Orleans. Sforza was lost,⁴ if the Milanese, to uphold their compromised cause, did not place him beyond competition. Having no other army than his, forsaken by nearly all their towns, they offered to maintain with fresh advantages his treaty with the late Duke, under the supreme authority of the communal council of Milan. It was hard for Sforza to obey when he aspired to command, but to yield to the service of these people seemed to him a means of becoming their masters.⁵

; Nothing was more probable than that he should gain the mastery, since the Milanese, making a virtue of necessity, for-

¹ The details may be seen in Antonio des Agostini, part 4, c. 5, xxv. 362; Neri Capponi, xviii. 1206; Poggio, xx. 423; Fazio, l. ix. p. 151; Malavolti, part 3, l. 2, p. 36; Ammirato, xxii. 60.

² Neri Capponi, xviii. 1207; Poggio, xx. 422; Fazio, l. ix. p. 151; Agostini, part 4, c. 6, xxv. 365; Boninsegni, p. 87; Machiavelli, vi. 90 B.

³ December 27, 1447. Letter indicated by Desjardins, i. 61.

⁴ Letter of January 6, 1448, indicated by Desjardins, i. 61, 62.

⁵ Simoneta, xxi. 401; Machiavelli, vi. 89 A; *Arch. Stor.*, n. ser., xv. part 2, p. 32.

gave him all his violences and usurpations—the occupation of Pavia, that once so bitterly irritated them; ¹ of Tortona, aggravated by the relapse; ² of Piacenza, delivered up by him to such a horrible pillage that, wrote a soldier, a chronicler of Brescia, it would require a ream of paper to note all the cruelties. ³ One of his lieutenants, Colleoni of Bergamo, having defeated Renaud du Dresnay, one of the Duke of Orleans' lieutenants at Asti, ⁴ he had only to cope with Venice and the King of Naples, an agreement between whom he was bound at any cost to prevent. Cosimo helped him *totis viribus*; but he could do little because Alphonsus was furious that they should wish to rob him of his slice of the cake, ⁵ and because the Pope, ready to oppose Venice, desired to humour the King, his dangerous enemy.

Thus all the efforts of Cosimo and Nicholas V., so closely united, ⁶ were perforce directed against Venice, and the arrival of two Florentine orators upon the lagunes to negotiate an attempt against King Alphonsus in favour of Sforza and King René ⁷ was pure comedy. The answer and its consequences

¹ Ant. Guidoboni to Sforza, September 12, 1447, Orig., No. 1584, f. 305. It is true that they had soon to smother their anger; on the 18th of the same month the Milanese submitted to Sforza: "Capitula que supplicant sibi concedi et confirmari ac inviolabiliter observari per illustrem D. Fr. Sfortiam, vice comitem" (*Arch. Sforz.*, Orig., No. 1584, f. 318-325).

² September 1447. Simoneta, xxi. 407; Machiavelli, vi. 90 B; *Arch. Stor.*, n. ser., xv. part 2, p. 32; Ricotti, iii. 119; Sismondi, vi. 161.

³ Cristoforo da Soldo, R. I. S., xxi. 845. Cf. *Ann. Placent.*, xx. 896; the writer, Ant. de Ripalta, was one of the victims of this plunder; Simoneta, xxi. 408; *Cron. Bol.*, xviii. 688; Ricotti, iii. 120; Sismondi, vi. 170. These dark stories are not exaggerated, since Piacenza never rose again.

⁴ October 11, 1447. Simoneta, xxi. 429; Sanuto, xxii. 1127; Sabellico, dec. iii. l. 6, f. 670; Sismondi, vi. 165.

⁵ Nicodemo to Sforza, 22nd and 29th February 1448, Orig., No. 1585, f. 34.

⁶ "El papa se mostra male contento ch'el Re de Raghona gli manchi de questo accordo, ma mostra non ne potere fare altro al presente, et cum Cosimo mostra intendersi benissimo, maxime a la oppressione de Venetiani et redurli ad humeltà" (Nicod. to Sforza, February 22, 1448, *ibid.*, f. 49). The same Nicodemo says of Cosimo, "Al tutto è scoperto contra li Venetiani" (February 29, 1448, *ibid.*, f. 34).

⁷ March 9, 1448. Letter indicated by Desjardins, i. 61. According to this letter, the ambassadors were Neri Capponi and Dietisalvi Neroni. Nicodemo

were known beforehand. Soon Sforza received from the Milanese the order to attack Caravaggio for the seizure of Lodi, and on September 15, 1448, he gained one of the most important victories of the century. If it be true, as Sanuto asserts, that only one Venetian perished in the fray, none the less did the entire Venetian army fall into the hands of the conqueror.¹

The danger was great for the poor Milanese, striving desperately to hold him in check. Before Sforza's triumph they could hardly agree about him, afterwards they well nigh succeeded: they secretly implored Alphonsus to put a spoke in his wheel, and pressed Brescia to resist him in downright earnest.² Thus threatened, Sforza did not hesitate; having thrashed the Venetians through the Milanese, he would now thrash the Milanese through the Venetians. All depended upon their acceptance of his services, and they did accept. Disgusted with their captain, Attendolo, who was just beaten, they replaced him by his conqueror. They felt certain that their new instrument, now in their pay, could only rule as a subordinate in Milan, if even the Milanese did not revolt against his treason, and give themselves to Venice.³ In this time of cynical turncoats, Sforza's game seemed utterly shameless, since the officious Simoneta thought himself bound to justify it; he quoted extenuating circumstances, and the ingratitude of the people, who in the beginning of the year had taken the initiative in the negotiations with the Council of Ten.⁴ The agreement was drawn up at Rivoltella on October 18. The

(February 28, 1448, f. 34) says that Alessandro des Alessandri and Domenico Martelli were elected on the eve for this embassy.

¹ Sanuto, xxii. 1129; Simoneta, xxi. 444, 476; *Ist. Bresc.*, xxi. 847, 851; Sabellico, Dec. iii. l. 6, f. 674; Platina, xx. 846; Boninsegni, p. 87; Machiavelli, vi. 91 A; Ricotti, iii. 130-136; Sismondi, vi. 171-183.

² "Senza dubio infra uno mese ad tardius Milano è per fare grande novità; li Ghibellini tuti se accordano a volere V. S. par Signore, et li Guelfi . . . prima vogliono darsi a Venetiani che havervi per signore" (Nicod. to Sforza, June 24, 1448, Orig., No. 1585, f. 38).

³ *Giorn. Napol.*, xvi. 1130; Machiavelli, vi. 91 B.

⁴ Simoneta, xxi. 442. Cf. *Ist. Bresc.*, xxi. 846.

serene Republic engaged to aid Sforza in the conquest of Milan and the Milanese, on condition of sharing with him, the Adda serving as a frontier,¹ and from that day she recognised him as the Duke of Milan.²

We need not be surprised that a point was put upon the unfortunate town's indignation, and that an edict at once suppressed all communication with Sforza, his adherents, and the towns subjected to him.³ What does surprise us is, that Florence should have been so indifferent to a bargain that made a short ladder for her ally. Having at this period no affairs of her own, she lived, so to speak, by those of others, and her history is made up of her sentiments towards others. Cosimo was certainly faithful to Sforza, from whom he could only hope for reimbursement of his advances by the effective possession of wealthy Milan. In his policy he even acquired the support of Neri Capponi, who, for a long while too jealous not to be hostile to his right hand,⁴ had refused an embassy to the condottiere,⁵ and desired a union with Venice and the division of Lombardy;⁶ but his argument was upset by the treaty of Rivoltella, which cut Lombardy in two, and relieved Florence from fighting against Venice to support Sforza. But although believing with their countrymen that the Republic was not likely to thrive in Milan,⁷ their support of the usurper met with a firm resistance: it was felt that money and subsidies would be required, hence new taxes were levied at the rate of twenty-four at a stroke. Cosimo had often tried to conceal his succour by passing it from hand

¹ See the treaty in Du Mont, vol. iii. part 1, p. 169, and in *Arch. Sforz.*, Orig., No. 1585, f. 45. Cf. Simoneta, xxi. 485; Navagero, xxiii. 1112; *Ist. Bresc.*, xxi. 855; Sabellico, Dec. iii. l. 6, f. 675; *Arch. Stor.*, n. ser., xv. part 2, p. 33.

² *Arch. Stor.*, n. ser., xv. part 2, p. 31.

³ *Arch. Civico de Milan*, reg. C. fol. 52, in *Arch. Stor.*, *ibid.*, p. 33.

⁴ Machiavelli, vi. 94 A.

⁵ Cavalcanti, *Sec. Storia*, c. 55, ii. 253.

⁶ Cavalcanti, *Append.*, ii. 517; Machiavelli, vi. 94 A.

⁷ Machiavelli, vi. 91 A. Cf. Giacomo de Camerino to Sforza, 1449; *Arch. de San Fidele*, in *Arch. Stor.*, n. ser., xv. part 2, p. 35, n. 17. G. Capponi (ii. 49, n. 4) has reproduced the text.

to hand; unfortunately he was not always ready to do so; besides, every one knew that, as officer of the *monte*, as principal citizen and banker of the Republic, he could shield himself by drawing upon the public treasury, by keeping back the door-tax, by extorting a law to recover arrears; ¹ he could even get himself openly repaid, swearing by all the gods that he would never return to it, though, as a matter of fact, he was sure to do so.²

Wheels were working within wheels. Cosimo could not shake off Sforza, and Sforza was always begging. What did it matter to that ambitious soldier that an epidemic, freely given the name of pest, banished from Florence five-sevenths of her inhabitants, and that the town-bells summoning them to the council did not gather the necessary quorum for valid deliberation? ³ To refuse him gold was to seek his ruin.⁴ He complained of not receiving a shabby *quatrino*, and of having nobody but Cosimo on his side. His orators exhorted him to write one of those letters he could write so well. "To obtain something besides words, the Florentines must be warmed with something besides sunshine."⁵ But how to warm people in fear of a Neapolitan invasion, who saw Venice, in spite of her engagements at Rivoltella, refraining from pleading Sforza's cause with them, and who might think, in consequence, that it would be folly to bleed themselves for an adventurer who had alienated Milan from him, and whom Venice only sup-

¹ "Aggiungevano come le casse delle porte s'andavano a votare a casa di Cosimo" (Cavalcanti, *Sec. Storia*, c. 33, ii. 211). Cf. Machiavelli, vi. 93 B.

² Cambi, *Ann. 1449, Del.*, xx. 265; Cavalcanti, *Sec. Storia*, c. 69, 70, ii. 269.

³ Letter from Sforza's orator, June 30, 1449, in *Arch. Stor.*, n. ser., xv. part 2, p. 35, and G. Capponi, ii. 49, n. 4.

⁴ Arch. de San Fedele, ducal correspondence, without date, in *Arch. Stor.*, *ibid.*, p. 35, and G. Capponi, ii. 49, n. 4.

⁵ "Non se po obtener de fare un quatrino. . . . Da Cosimo in fora non ce havete homo al mondo qui che la piglia a denti; or potò più uno tristo ad guastare una simile faccenda che due boni ad aconzarla. . . con una vostra lettera como sapete fare, mostrarvi animoso et non volere esser balocato e tenuto in tempo, ve habia grandemente a giovare, et che per altra via recoglieremo parole et non danari, se già non havessero qualche calda d'altri ch'è de sole" (Nicod. to Sforza, June 18, 1449, *Orig.*, No. 1585, f. 68).

ported with half a heart.¹ If he complained through letters and ambassadors, if he persisted in holding out his hand, it was through cupidity and not through poverty, since he had conquered in turn the Lombard towns, Piacenza, Abbiategrasso, Romagnoso, Tortona, Alexandria (1448), and, after a long siege, Vigevano (June 4, 1449).²

Milan, discouraged, did not wait for this last disaster to treat with the Council of Ten. On the 8th January 1449 she sent them one of her merchants, Enrico Panigarola, then settled at Venice. Venice felt some diffidence in so soon breaking the treaty of Rivoltella,³ but she well understood that it was a gross error not to protect the difficult growth of the Milanese Republic, which could not be other than anaemic. An armistice and the preliminaries of peace were followed at Brescia (September 24) by the signing of the treaty.⁴ Sforza was allowed twenty days to accede and submit to the scarcely tempting conditions offered him;⁵ but two days hardly passed when "Enrico Panigarola and the other ruffians who governed Milan,"⁶ launched a proclamation ordering every one to arm in readiness to march against him.⁷

As for him, he dragged along with eyes turned towards Florence, where he hoped the faithful Cosimo would triumph over the general ill-will,⁸ "if he had not the gout, and if he

¹ *Arch. Stor.*, *ibid.*, p. 36.

² See Sismondi, vi. 190, 203, and Cipolla, p. 435 *sq.*

³ *Arch. Civico* of Milan, Reg. C., f. 52, *Arch. Stor.*, n. ser., xv. part 2, 34.

⁴ *Arch. Stor.*, *ibid.*, p. 37, and n. 22. See text in *Arch. Sforz.*, Orig., No. 1585, f. 112-114.

⁵ Restitution against the indemnity of the Milanese towns Coma, Lodi, preservation of Cremona, Parma, Pavia (Letter of Sforza to the Signory of Florence, Arch. de S. Fedele, Corresp. Duc., *Arch. Stor.*, *ibid.*, p. 41).

⁶ "Quello Henrichino Panigarola et alcuni altri ribaldi che regeno adesso Milano hanno promesso alla signoria di tenere modo che Milano gli venerà in le mane" (Letter from Sforza, October 23, 1449, *Arch. Sforz.*, Orig., No. 1585, f. 93, and Buser, App., p. 367.)

⁷ "Omnes sint in puncto contra Sfortiam" (Proclamation of September 26, *Arch. Stor.*, *ibid.*, p. 39, and n. 28).

⁸ "Molti seguano questa erronea opinione, ma per la Dio gracia el ce il bon patrono e defensore Cosmo, il quale arditamente et cum summa astutia ha sbrigliato et refrenato la brigata contraria, in modo che se in tuto non si remove il loro

could surmount his natural dilatoriness." ¹ But at the foot of the walls of Venice, summoned to yield to the treaty *senza replicazione alcuna*,² he threw down the mask; but Venice would not accept his refusal; Florence pleaded in vain in his favour;³ and on the 24th December, the day he wrote to his Tuscan allies that the peace had been made in spite of him,⁴ Venice and Milan concluded an offensive league against the illegitimate usurpers of a part of the territories that the one guaranteed the other on paper, instead of daring, as a more efficacious guarantee, to cross the path of Sforza.⁵

Vain agreement! the hour had come for the unfortunate Milan to make a choice:—submit to the captain in her pay, and impose a moderate government upon him as the Ghibeline nobles wished, or choose the devil—still worse, the Grand Turk, and put to death him, the Venetian ambassador, and those who proposed to yield. In their passion the Guelphs demanded this.⁶ But necessity makes our laws; want of provisions and a horrible famine induced the most energetic to compound.⁷ As what was in the mind could not be known, we may recognise the courage of a citizen, one of Sforza's ancient soldiers, Gaspare de Vimercate, in asserting in the General Assembly (February 26, 1450) that the kings of France and Naples being too distant, and the Duke of Savoy too weak to protect

pensero, saltem non la possono mandar ad effecto" (Francesco des Butichelli to Sforza, Florence, December 7, 1449, Orig., No. 1585, f. 102).

¹ "Non bisognava za fusse stato absente al Trebio cum le gotte" (*ibid.*). "A un pocò de tardità laquale molte fiata è in Cosimo de soa natura" (Nicod. to Sforza, June 3, 1451, Orig., No. 1585, f. 195).

² Sforza's letter to the Florentines, *Arch. Stor.*, n. ser., xv. part 2, p. 42, n. 36.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁴ "La pace è stata facta senza alcuna saputa de mi" (*ibid.*, p. 40, n. 29).

⁵ *Arch. Stor.*, *ibid.*, p. 43, 44. The Pope also refused him help (Giov. des Baldirombi, of the Minor Brothers, to Sforza, Venice, 1449, Corres. Duc., *Arch. Stor.*, n. ser., xv. part 2, p. 37, n. 21).

⁶ Simoneta, xxi. 597; Machiavelli, vi. 94 B; *Arch. Stor.*, n. ser., xv. part 2, p. 45. A letter of the 22nd August 1450 speaks also of the offers made to Venice to kill Sforza during the year (Arch. Ven. Cons. X., mista 13, in Buser, App., p. 367).

⁷ Simoneta, xxi. 594.

Milan from Venice, salvation lay in throwing themselves upon the powerful and merciful Count Francesco. The orator would perhaps have been rent the day before, but this day the name of the man none dared to pronounce was received enthusiastically as that of their sole saviour.¹

The first step taken, the rest cost little. Milan only received Sforza under reserve and unprejudiced by his rights;² but hardly had he made his entrance (March 25),³ than the arrogant conditions were simply humble prayers. Thus a peasant succeeded to the Visconti at the precise moment when his mercenaries, instruments of his fortune, fell into decadence, thanks to the permanent armies of Alphonsus established in Italy, as Charles VII.'s were in France, thanks to the progress of firearms and infantry. The new Duke should have followed his example, and created armies by means of big taxes, and forbidden his soldiers to leave his states to serve others. In default of an intelligent and opportune imitation, his dynasty melted away like sand, not reaching the sixth successor, and all of his heirs shared a tragic fate.⁴

But at first this new power seemed stable enough, as they all do at the dawn, and, after all, a duration of six generations is a relative solidity in the course of ordinary affairs.

¹ Simoneta, xxi. 600; Boninsegni, p. 89; *Ist. Bresc.*, xxi. 863; Machiavelli, vi. 94 B; Ammirato, xxii. 63.

² "Cum reservatione et sine prejudicio cujus libet juris."

³ The writers say the 26th or 28th February; M. Bertolini, who has seen the documents, gives the date 25th March, and even adds that on the 11th March the arrangements for the solemn entrance had been made. Cf. Simoneta, xxi. 602; *Ann. Placent.*, xx. 901; Sanuto, xxii. 1137; Navagero, xxiii. 1114. The *Capitula inter Civitatem Mediolani et Fr. Sfortiam*, are of the 26th February. See *Arch. Sforz.*, Orig., No. 1585, f. 136-147.

⁴ See Ricotti, iii. 150-158; Sismondi, vi. 215.

CHAPTER IV.

COSIMO'S RULE—WARS AND NEGOTIATIONS WITH VENICE AND NAPLES.

1450—1454.

To keep the Venetians aloof, Cosimo treats with Naples—Alphonsus prefers Venice—Venetian and Neapolitan embassy at Florence (March 6, 1451)—Proscription of the Florentine merchants (May)—Florentine alliance with Sforza—Embassy in France (September 10)—Letters patent of Charles VII. and treaty (February 21, 1452)—The Emperor Frederick III. passes through Florence (January 30, May 5)—War declared against the Florentines by Alphonsus (June 11)—Useless campaign of his son—Fresh negotiations in France (September 28)—Campaign of Alessandro Sforza (August 1453)—Acquisition of the Count of Bagno (August 12)—Treaty with France (April 11)—King René in Lombardy (September)—Hatred of the French in Italy—René's return to France—Consequence of the taking of Constantinople upon Italian quarrels—Peace of Lodi (April 9, 1454) imposed by Venice and Sforza—The Powers refuse to join the crusade against the Turks.

FLORENCE might rest content with the complete and definite success of her ancient ally. In the face of this achievement all dissensions vanished. Even the least enthusiastic could not regret their inveterate enemy, the late Duke. A few of the chief citizens were sent to congratulate his successor—Piero de Cosimo, Neri Capponi, Luca Pitti, Dietisalvi de Nerone.¹ Following circumstances, the crowned peasant was to be the buckler or the sword of Florence against Venice.

Not that there was any rupture between the two Republics, but Giannozzo Manetti, the Florentine spokesman upon the Lagoons, appearing too favourable to the Council of Ten, Piero and Neri were sent thither as a counterbalance. Neri, however, fell in with his ideas, which had been formerly his own, and which were shared by many others in the councils of his country, even in the palace. Individual policy was disturbed

¹ Simoneta, xxi. 608; Boninsegni, p. 89; Ammirato, xxii. 63.

by it. Having no official orders to give the ambassadors, Cosimo advised his son Piero to return without delay, confessedly to decide the others to do likewise.¹ This was a safe calculation, and the collective departure presaged rupture.

From that time, before its accomplishment, the two Republics had the alliance of the powerful Alphonsus to dispute, hating in him the foreigner and fearing the conqueror.² To avoid this ugly yoke, Cosimo made frequent appeals to King René. Seeing that he kept aloof, it was necessary to renew the advances made to the Aragonese, and as yet unaccepted. To this the pride of the Ten of War refused to lend itself.³ They even recalled the orators sent to this prince; but one of them, Giannozzo Pitti, having exposed the actions of the embassy, his colleague, Bernardo Giugni, openly wept and groaned over the recall that prevented them from signing the peace, and accentuating his words with his meridional exaggeration, so touched and persuaded the others, that the Ten were obliged to deny that the negotiations were compromised,⁴ and to send other ambassadors.⁵ The treaty was signed on June 21, 1450.⁶ This was only a truce, for which Florence

¹ "Piero, all'avuta di questa, te ne verrai, perchè venendone tu, non vi rimarrà, ignuno degli altri" (Letter quoted by Vespasiano, *Vita di Giannozzo Manetti*, p. 35, Turin, 1862, quoted by G. Capponi, ii. 54, n. 1. This different reading is not found in *Spicil. Rom.*, see vol. i. p. 594-598, c. 17, 20).

² Witness a curious passage, in which appears the Italian *chauvinisme* of the day, in Arch. of San Fedele, Corres. Ducale, *Arch. Stor.*, n. ser., xv. part 2, p. 36, n. 19.

³ On November 21, 1447, one of the Pazzi, a great friend of René, was sent to him as an ambassador (Lecoy de la Marche, i. 219). On April 16, 1448 he received this hyperbolic message: "Omnis nostra spes in vestris potentissimis armis et auxiliis posita est" (Letter of the Signory, Reg. xxxvi. f. 99, in Lecoy, i. 270).

⁴ Vespasiano, *Vita di Bernardo Giugni*, in *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., iv. part 1, p. 326-328.

⁵ Ammirato, xxii. 64. The two ambassadors were Giannozzo Pandolfini and Franco Sacchetti, the eloquent nephew of the *novelliere*, whom Sismondi confuses with his uncle, who died in 1402 (vi. 236).

⁶ See the text in Du Mont, vol. iii. part 1, p. 175. He was sent to the Signory by the ambassadors on the 24th. Doc. at the end of the *Vita del Re Alf. d' Arag.* by Vespasiano, in *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., iv. part 1, p. 419. The letters came with the *ulivo*, June 29; see Boninsegni, p. 99. Hence the errors of several authors, who give the date of the signing of the treaty as the 29th.

paid dearly. Alphonsus retained Castiglione della Pescaia, otherwise the means of landing in Tuscany by sea; the lord of Piombino, recommended to the Republic, became the King's vassal, sworn to present him every year, as an act of homage, with a golden cup worth 500 florins.¹

A good deal of unnecessary humiliation. Ten days later Venice obtained another treaty from Alphonsus, which annulled the Florentine one, and was more lasting.² But at the time this could not be known, and, thanks to his two treaties, the wily King was free to choose between the two rivals at an opportune moment. This Venice so well understood, although she had the advantage of the more recent signature, that she sought other allies far and wide—the Duke of Savoy, the Marquis of Montferrat, the commons of Sienna, who, in treating, had reserved the right of preventing the passage across their territory of any troops with inimical designs upon Florence,³ and finally Bologna, that Venice could only gain by overthrowing Santi Bentivoglio, a bastard born in exile in Florence, where one of his uncles had established him in the woollen trade with a capital of 300 florins, recommending him to Neri Capponi, and whom a sudden turn of fortune had placed at the head of the Bolognese.⁴ Venice went still farther; she sought to anticipate a foreseen struggle by suppressing Sforza through assassination, an ordinary expedient in her abominable tactics, only recently brought to light.⁵

¹ Ammirato, xxii. 64. Written legations of Neri Capponi (Arch. di Stato at Florence). A curious detail relating to this peace: tips were given to the ministers and royal servants, and the Italian word was then French: "Sa la V. S. quello si costuma in tali acti et di pagare il rogo per la vostra parta, et per beberaggi a vari ministri" (Letter of Pandolfini and Saccheti announcing the treaty to the Signory, Doc. at the end of the *Vita del Re Alf. d'Arag.*, by Vespasiano, *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., iv. part 1, p. 420).

² July 2, 1450. Text in Du Mont, iii. part 1, p. 178. Boninsegni (p. 91) places this treaty in the month of November.

³ Machiavelli, vi. 96 A.

⁴ Neri Capponi, xviii. 1207; Boninsegni, p. 80; Cavalcanti, *Sec. Stor.*, c. 48, ij. 242; Ammirato, xxii. 67. G. Capponi (ii. 51) gives long details upon this subject, copied from his ancestor, Neri.

⁵ In the *Revue Historique* (vol. xx. p. 108 sq.; Sept. 1882) M. Vladimir

Threatened by these intrigues, by this complication of alliances outside, around, and against her, should Florence take the initiative of an outbreak? Hardly; for if the Venetians did not receive her ambassadors, under pretext that they were obliged to consult their southern ally,¹ they themselves sent to Florence Matteo Vettori, while Alphonsus sent his secretary, the celebrated Antonio of Palermo. On the 6th March 1451, they communicated officially to the Signory the alliance of their masters, already known, they said, for eight months, concluded for the observance of peace, and open to all parties. But to these words, in a courteous speech, they added bitter reproaches for having the previous year sent for Alessandro Sforza, brother of the Duke, furnished the Duke himself with money, and procured an understanding between him and the Marquis of Mantua.² According to custom, the chancellor replied to the compliments as a man of letters, and time was taken to answer the reproaches. This duty Cosimo took upon himself on March 17. Although a poor speaker, if we may believe contemporaries, he spoke "marvellously, and so truthfully, in language so decorated, that the ambassadors, far from contradicting him, appeared soothed, contented, and enlightened."³ Probably he recited the fine phrases some secretary had manufactured and written out by his order in the silence of the cabinet.

On both sides they plentifully besprinkled each other with court holy-water, without either being deceived as to the

Lamansky has published the analyses of the documents extracted from divers Venetian depositories, which show the Republic accepting, and even provoking, projects of assassination, promising both pecuniary reward and positions to the assassins. From September 5, 1448, to November 25, 1453, there were no less than eight negotiations of this nature against Sforza. See p. 109-111. And doubtless M. Lamansky was not exact; he does not mention a letter of April 22, 1450, making an offer to Venice to kill Sforza (Arch. Ven. Cons. x. mista 13, in Buser, App., p. 367).

¹ Machiavelli, vi. 95 B.

² Boninsegni, p. 92.

³ *Ibid.* Ammirato (xxii. 65) reports lengthily Cosimo's speech, and Sismondi curtails it from him (vi. 237).

other's intentions, which were not even secret. Already, towards the end of 1450, Venice had heavily taxed the foreign merchants who traded in her dominions, taxed also their imported stuffs.¹ At the end of May 1451 she seized all Florentine merchandise, ordering all the Florentines to evacuate the territory before the 20th June. At the same time Alphonsus issued a similar decree. Venetian galleys were to be furnished him for its execution, and for the conquest of Genoa.²

Pressing offers were made to unite in a league against Florence several princes and states, notably the Emperor Constantine Paleologos, and even the little Republic of Ragusa, in vain, it is true.³ Those who repulsed these overtures had no reason to hide the fact from the light, and thus Florence knew that Venice and Naples were working for her ruin,⁴ though nothing appeared to have changed since the peace of the previous year, neither rupture nor declaration of war, and the latest diplomatic relations might even be described as friendly.

The rigour with which inoffensive merchants were treated came upon the people like a bolt from the blue. The shock was all the greater because this violence was accompanied by

¹ Ammirato, xxii. 65.

² "Hogì sono stato cum N. Signore quale me dice havere lettere da Vinesia da particolare cittadini, como Venetiani al tuto intendono cacciare Fiorentini de omne loro paese, et attendere, chel Re facia quel medesimo et dargli aiuto de galee per farlo fare contra Fiorentini. Ceterum che soa Santità ha aviso de uno de li principali cortesani del Re como el Re intende fare in ciò la voluntà de Venetiani. . . Crede che una de le principale casone per le quale el Re attende a fare contra li Fiorentini et adherirse a le voglie de Venetiani è per havere quelle 15 galee et cum le soe vedere de insignorirse de Zenoa" (Nicod. to Sforza, Rome, June 3, 1451, Orig., No. 1585, f. 195; Buser, App., p. 370).

³ Boninsegni, p. 94; Machiavelli, vi. 95 B. The Bolognese, stimulated by the Ten of War (Letter of December 19, 1451, *Arch. Sforz.*, Copies, No. 1599, f. 369), answer the orators of Venice and Naples that they intend to keep neutral; that they will offer neither food, passage, nor asylum to any one upon their side (without date, *ibid.*, p. 379).

⁴ "Per alcuni altri tractati astricti infra lo Imperatore e lo Re d'Aragona in quibus inter cetera dicitur contineri expressa destructio Florentinorum per Regem ragonum et papam consentendosi fieri poterit" (Doc. in Buser, App., p. 370).

perfidy, and even ingratitude. Sacchini, the historian of Mantua, better known under the name of Platina,¹ who was impartial upon the question, declares that the decree of Venice appeared inhuman to everybody, above all after the friendly services of Florence, to whom she notably owed the preservation of Brescia and Bergamo.²

For all reply, Florence indignantly named the Ten of War, and their names proved sufficiently the gravity of the struggle: Cosimo at the head, then Neri Capponi, Agnolo Acciajuoli, Luca des Albizzi, Domenico Boninsegni (the second historian of this name), and amongst the five others, according to custom, two artisans, an innkeeper, and an armourer.³ A close alliance with the new Duke of Milan was also concluded, the contracting parties guaranteeing mutual protection of their states. The Ten lured the famous condottiere, Simoneta, "of the camp of St. Peter," from the King's side, and attached him to the service of the Republic.⁴ Foreseeing that the Neapolitans would attack Tuscany and the Venetians Milan, they sent to Charles VII. of France one of their party, Agnolo Acciajuoli, who had broken with the embassy since 1415, was the confident and ally of Cosimo,⁵ had shared his exile, and had returned with him.⁶

After the customary servile protestations and compliments to France upon her brilliant victories over the English, the orator was ordered to expose the situation in Italy and excuse the Republic for not having helped King René in his Neapolitan expedition; but in gliding lightly over this delicate point,⁷

¹ Sacchini was born at Platina, a village of Cremona.

² Platina, xx. 849.

³ Other *Balie* of the Ten, in 1452 and 1453, contained also two artisans. See Ammirato, xxii. 74 and 78.

⁴ Boninsegni, p. 94; Ammirato, xxii. 68.

⁵ His sister Laudomia had married Pier Francesco de' Medicis.

⁶ See biographical notice in Desjardins, i. 55, subject to the frequent errors of this writer.

⁷ "E di questa parte uscirete aptamente, perchè non è tale che vi si voglia dimorare" (Instructions to Ang. Acciajuoli, September 10, 1451, in Desjardins, i. 65).

he was to show the contradictory complication of negotiations in Italy against Florence, and even against France, and to solicit the alliance of Charles VII., leaving him the choice of means of action. And if the Most Christian King should ask in what way the Republic meant to co-operate in the enterprise, with men or money, the orator was to reply that upon his departure this question had not been anticipated, and in consequence not considered,¹ but that the King could count upon the Florentine people body and soul. Still, as Florence desired no acquisition, and would only incur expense, she could solely pledge herself, upon sharp necessity, for 3000 horse at the most, and this by private and particular treaty.² And lastly, Charles VII. was to be urged to expel the Venetian merchants from his kingdom, and to attack the King of Aragon in Navarre.³

These overtures, lengthily discussed, were soon known of, and their effect upon all interested was striking. No one doubted that the King of France would start the campaign, if only to rid himself of a band of soldiers he no longer needed. He was considered already the master of Lombardy and Genoa, of all Italy, where allies would not fail him, and which he imagined inexhaustibly rich. Here was an opportunity to seize the imperial crown, transfer again the Holy See to Avignon, and avenge himself at his pleasure upon the Dukes of Burgundy and Savoy, and all the other friends of England.⁴ In fact, before the end of the year he had agreed with Acciajuoli upon the basis of the treaty; but always in dread of a fresh British invasion, and detained by the Duke of Orleans, who regarded Sforza as an usurper and a personal enemy, he resisted the eagerness of his army.⁵ It was only on

¹ "Qui non s'imaginò la S. M. avere tale pensiero" (Desjardins, i. 68, and Supplement to the Instructions, p. 70, 71).

² *Ibid.*, Supplement, p. 71.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

⁴ September 12, 1451. Memoriale über die Verhältnisse Frankreichs zu Italien, geschrieben in Mailand. Italian text in Buser, App., p. 372.

⁵ Acciajuoli's letter to Sforza, Tours, December 21, 1451, *Arch. Sforz.*, Orig.,

February 21, 1452, that he undertook, by letters patent, from that day till the Feast of St. John in the following year, to defend the Florentines and the Duke of Milan against everybody except the Pope and the Emperor, to send them an army, the fixing of whose number he reserved, under the command of a prince of the blood or another captain; but he hoped that meanwhile the difficulties would be smoothed, not excluding those that interested his own family, a very transparent allusion to the pretensions of the Duke of Orleans to Genoa and Milan.¹

An incident that once would have precipitated war postponed it. Even before the conclusion of the treaty between France, Sforza, and Florence, the Emperor Frederick III. left for Italy. This son of the Duke of Austria and Styrie Ernest had been reigning for twelve years by usurpation. He had had himself shabbily substituted for his nephew and pupil, Ladislas the posthumous, a lad of fourteen, the son of Albert II., King of Hungary and Bohemia,² and half in prudence, half in distrust, brought him about everywhere he went. Hated in Germany for his treachery,³ this despised prince came to Rome, like many another, in search of the imperial crown;

No. 1585, f. 234. Though sent from Florence, Acciajuoli corresponded with Sforza, as well as with his chiefs. Nothing better shows the close intimacy between Florence and Milan at this time.

¹ Letters patent in Desjardins, i. 72; Acciajuoli's letter, February 27, 1452; *Lettere alla Signoria*, vol. viii. No. 221; Lecoy de la Marche, i. 271. The letter quoted from the same, dated December 21, 1451, indicates the principal basis of the treaty, notably the administration of the conquests. All the conquests in Tuscany were to belong to Florence, even though she had no right to them, paying a pecuniary indemnity to France. The conquests in Lombardy were for Sforza; upon the Church Estates, for the Pope, with the duty of lending aid to the King or any of his blood in the Italian invasions (*Arch. Sforz.*, Orig., No. 1585, f. 234).

² Elizabeth, daughter of Sigismond and mother of Ladislas, confided him to the care of Frederick, and the Hungarians never saw him again. (See Sismondi, vi. 240, and Ammirato, xxii. 71).

³ "El Imperatore non ha quello favore da Alemania qual se credeva in questa sua venuta. . . . Tuti li baroni di Hungaria, Boemia, Moravia et de la principale parte de Austria sono mal disposti contra di lui," &c. (Leodrysius de Ghellis to Sforza, January 15, 1452, Orig., No. 1586, f. 18).

but he came as a traveller, not as a sovereign, for 1500 horse was hardly an escort for a Cæsar, a King of the Romans.¹

Fearing Sforza, and hurt that he should have taken the title of Duke of Milan without his permission, he refused to recognise him,² and in consequence abstained from taking the iron crown at Monza, a customary preliminary of the ceremony awaiting him at Rome.³ This was his start in Italy. He passed through Venice and Ferrara preceded by a solemn embassy to proclaim his peaceful intentions and demand passports at Florence, as well as to look after his well-being and that of his escort throughout these dominions.⁴ On the 29th January, when he crossed the frontier, a number of the "Florentine nobility," as Ammirato calls them, hastened to meet him at Scarperia in "marvellous" pomp and order. Cosimo and Bernardetto offered him the hospitality of their country-houses, and next day the Archbishop, St. Antonine,⁵ went to meet him beyond the town with his canons and twenty-two knights. There, in the convent of San Gallo, under a richly decorated *loggia*, Frederick received the homage of the Ten, who prostrated themselves at his feet, and he assisted at the procession of the clergy with their crosses. Processions were in those days like our reviews. Carlo Marsuppini d'Arezzo, secretary of the Republic, harangued him in the name of the priors and all the town, whose resources

¹ Machiavelli, vi. 96 A.

² "Havesse V. S. facto male ad havesse intitullato del ducato senza concessione imperiale" (Nic. des Arcimboldi to Sforza, Florence, May 7, 1452. Orig., No. 1586, f. 113).

³ "Essendo mostro a lo Imp. la via di tornare in Lombardia . . . lo Imp. rispose et si steti: Comes Franciscus capet (*sic*) nos, et tornando quelli tali ad replicare: come può credere la M. V. el conte Francesco vi facessi injuria, rispuose anchora: et si capet nos; et tertio itterando quelli che questo seria troppo grande infamia, tertio disse: et si capet nos, pare essemus capti" (Nicodemo and four others to Sforza, March 16, 1452, Orig., No. 1586, f. 55, and in Buser, App., p. 374).

⁴ Neri Capponi, xviii. 1211.

⁵ Antonio de Ser Niccolò Pierozzo, Florentine. He was Archbishop of Florence since 1446, a preaching friar, and a man of wide and great renown for his teaching and his example (Boninsegni, p. 81).

he placed at his disposal. His chancellor, Silvio Piccolomini of Sienna, the Æneas Sylvius of the Renaissance and the future Pius II. of the Church, replied in his name. When the Kaiser mounted his horse to ride to Santa Maria Novella, where he was to occupy the rooms of the Popes, the Ten held his bridle as far as the gate of San Gallo, where the priors received him and placed him under a daïs, his bridle being held on the right hand by the Gonfalonier of Justice, and on the left by the *proposto*. From the windows the women, and in the streets the men, greeted their host with loud *vivas*. During the four days it pleased him to remain and rest, his expenses were defrayed to the sum of 13,000 florins.¹

On the 8th March he was in Rome, and left it on the 25th for Naples, where he only remained until the 20th April, and on the 19th June he returned to his states.² Passing in May a second time through Florence, he was received with the same demonstrations, and with greater delight and enthusiasm than in any other city. The people did not know, and the magistrates feigned to ignore, that in Rome, upon stepping from his galley on shore, the orator of Venice fared as well at his hand as the orator of Florence;³ that at Naples he was accused of having secretly concluded an understanding against Florence and Sforza with its magnificent monarch, who spent 50,000 ducats upon him, 14,000 of which went in presents to the Empress.⁴ The Florentine Government, modelled upon that of Venice, was perfectly able to master its feelings, but it could not master the events which shortened the Emperor's stay in the town. Frederick found awaiting him the dis-

¹ Boninsegni, p. 95; Ammirato, xxii. 70.

² Neri Capponi, xviii. 1211; *Cron. Bol.*, xviii. 698; Malavolti, part 3, l. 2, p. 38 v°; Machiavelli, vi. 96 A; Ammirato, xxii. 70.

³ Nicodemo and Nic. des Arcimboldi to Sforza. Rome, April 24, 1452, Orig., No. 1586, f. 104.

⁴ *Ibid.*, and letters of 6th and 7th May, f. 111 and 113. Nic. des Arcimboldi adds, supposing Frederick to have conferred upon Alphonsus the title of Duke of Milan, which would be disgraceful: "Queli titoli serano derisorii, però che altro ce bisognerà ad havar la possessione che pur haver le carte" (Florence, May 6, 1452, *ibid.*, f. 111).

agreeable surprise of a Hungarian embassy come to claim Ladislas from him. He refused to receive it in spite of the prayers of the Gonfalonier of Justice, and said drily that he would think the matter over upon his return home.¹ In vain did Ladislas solicit a fresh decision at the instigation of his tutor. The Ten refused either to countenance his flight or to feign ignorance of it. The unworthy guardian was doubtless grateful² to them, but, lest they should change their mind, he hurried off two days after his arrival so precipitously that he did not wait for the priors on horseback, who had left the palace to form his escort. These magistrates, little recking of their own or their country's dignity, ran after him and joined him outside to offer their trivial homage.³ Upon his return, still more than upon his coming, through the exigencies of an empty purse, did this wretched emperor sell to the highest bidder, under the euphonious name of reward, titles, prerogatives, patents of nobility, and imperial functions, the right of legitimatising natural children and of pardoning forgers.⁴ And yet we complain that the worship of royalty has diminished!

He was still in Italy when the gravest resolutions were adopted and published without his permission. On the 9th April, Florence promulgated the league formed with the King of France and the Duke of Milan.⁵ On the 16th May, at the moment that Frederick, returning to Germany, crossed into Venetian territory, Venice declared war with Sforza,⁶ and on the 2nd June Alphonsus did likewise with Florence by a curt letter, in which he vaguely reproached her with having assisted his enemies.⁷ The priors at once retorted with counter-

¹ Nic. des Arcimboldi to Sforza, Florence, May 6, 1452, Orig., No. 1586, f. 111; Boninsegni, p. 98; Ammirato, xxiii. 71.

² Neri Capponi, xviii. 1211.

³ Boninsegni, p. 99; Ammirato, xxii. 71.

⁴ See details in Boninsegni, p. 99; Machiavelli, vi. 96 A; Ammirato, xxii. 71; Sismondi, vi. 243; Du Mont, iii. part 1, p. 185.

⁵ Boninsegni, p. 98.

⁶ Ammirato, xxii. 71.

⁷ *Arch. Sforz.*, Orig., No. 1586, f. 127. Doc. published in the *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., iv. part 1, p. 422.

accusations and reproaches (June 16), that, without declaration of war, the royal troops had invaded the dominions of the Republic and of her dependencies; that Venice, in contempt of honesty and the Emperor, had invaded, pillaged the frontiers of Milan, and taken several places—two equally unmerited insults. One sentence in this reply goes beyond the ordinary tone, and proves a profound vexation: "We ask you to judge impartially whose cause is the most honest, yours or ours."¹

This was no time for judgment or arbitration. Already on the 11th June a single trumpeter had left Naples to challenge Florence.² Alphonsus's natural son and future successor, Don Fernando, hardly twenty, but under the guidance of his mentor, the famous Count of Urbino, followed with an army of ten or twelve thousand men. Entering the Florentine territory by Cortona, on the 12th July he was before Forano, outside whose ill-protected walls he was kept a month and a half (till September 2), to his everlasting shame. Boninsegni calls this siege "the martyrdom of Don Fernando."³ His patience was exhausted in other smaller and more fortunate places, and the desertion of his soldiers, the obstinacy of Rosso Ridolfi, commissary of the Republic, and the autumn rains, forced him to retreat without other glory than that of having devastated the open country within six miles of Florence.⁴

While he was thus squandering the time, forces, and gold of his father, Florence had brought vigorous pressure to bear upon the semi-indifferent King of France. On the 28th September, the orator Acciajuoli received a brother ambassador, Francesco Venturi, and fresh instructions.⁵ There were abun-

¹ *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., iv. part 1, p. 422.

² Boninsegni, p. 99.

³ *Cron. d'Agobbio*, xxi. 989; Boninsegni, p. 100.

⁴ Boninsegni, p. 101; Neri Capponi, xviii. 1212; Bonincontri, xxi. 156; Fazio, l. x. p. 164; Poggio, xx. 428; Machiavelli, vi. 96; Ammirato, xxii. 72. Among the castles that arrested and rebuffed D. Fernando were Castellina, at the entrance of the valley of the Chianti, which kept him fourteen days, and Brolio, still the property of the feudal family Ricasoli.

⁵ Doc. in Fabroni, p. 200. Cf. Ammirato, xxii. 73.

dant reasons for the speedy action of the "sacred crown." The King of Aragon only hated the Republic because of its devotion to the King of France; Charles was powerful, and his victories augured well; in divided Italy he would have on his side Florence, Milan, and Genoa; the cause was just; the kingdoms iniquitously acquired should return to their rightful owners; inevitably the lords and barons of Naples would rise up. From this flood of insincere arguments the capital insinuation emerges: since the king hesitated to come to the aid of Florence and Sforza, Florence and Sforza intended to assist him in order to return Naples to René. The Republic would contribute 4000 horse on the condition that the Duke of Milan furnished the same number, and the "sacred crown" 11,000 more, that is, "15,000 paid." The French troops were to arrive in March, or even winter in Lombardy, so as to start the campaign at the first sign of fine weather.

As for the acquisitions, these would be left to the discretion of his "most divine wisdom," recalling in their regard the propositions of the previous year, namely, that the conquests in Tuscany should belong to Florence.¹ The financial question, upon which the Florentine Government had maintained a prudent, say rather an imprudent reserve,² was this time resolutely broached. Florence would furnish 10,000 florins a month for the war in Lombardy or Tuscany, and two months' pay to the royal troops upon their dismissal: if she engaged herself in reconquering the kingdom, she would entertain at her own expense 4000 horse and 1000 infantry. This was clearly stating matters, and the offer was tempting; yet, such was the eagerness to obtain the King's active concurrence, that the ambassadors were secretly authorised to exceed their instructions upon this point.³ Unfortunately, their efforts had

¹ See above, p. 106, n. 1.

² See above, p. 105.

³ Doc. in Fabroni, p. 200-211. G. Capponi (ii. 57, n.) quotes a passage from these instructions, of which he possessed a written copy, which differs from the text published by Fabroni; but there is nothing new or interesting in it except the

no result, for Bordeaux just then opened her gates to the English.¹ Charles was prodigal of words, but of little else of value, as was seen in the spring. Already he had alienated the Duke of Savoy from the Venetians,² and now he was trying to reconcile Sforza with the Marquis of Montferrat and his brother.³ Without deciding what he would do in Italy, he was willing enough to do something when he had leisure. This indefinite postponement was hardly encouraging, and the hostilities began without waiting for him; but they were not very effectual. To a people exhausted, weakened, and unwilling to fight, an indifferent warrior even is an object of admiration: the Neapolitan, Porcelli, compares Piccinino to Scipio, and Sforza to Hannibal,⁴ although Sforza only took up arms through a selfish desire for enjoyment. In Florence the party for peace was headed by Nerone Nigi Dietisalvi, and more than once were they on the point of carrying the day when an attack of gout nailed Cosimo to his bed. Then it was that the people thundered against the taxes, and declared that war could not be prolonged beyond the summer.⁵ Sforza's ambassadors were demanding subsidies and threatening to leave within twenty-four hours, and, before yielding, the Ten wished to consult the all-powerful invalid, but Cosimo was invisible

request that the king would send René if he did not come himself. Desjardins (p. 76, 77, n.) speaks of this document, but he probably never saw it, since he refers it to p. 308 in Fabroni, and there is no p. 308 in the edition he used. Moreover, he states that they are erroneously dated in Fabroni as 26th January 1453, whereas they are dated 28th September 1452, as in the document of the archives.

¹ See H. Martin, vi. 479-482.

² November 7, 1452. The instructions of the Florentine ambassadors are the last days of September; but they did not leave at once, and it took some time to go from Florence to Tours or to Paris.

³ December 1452. Documents mentioned in Desjardins, i. 77.

⁴ *Comment.*, 1st ser. R. I. S., xx. 65-154, and 2nd ser., xxv. 1-66.

⁵ "Cosimo sta in lecto in mano del nostro maestro Benedecto da Norsa che è qui in casa soa, et questo male de Cosimo da animo a li nimici soy, et questa graveza de l'altro canto ha desperati molti et de li principali in modo che vedo questa città in mala conditione. . . . El facto loro sta in excessiva discensione et discordia, in modo che non credono potere tirare questa guerra più là che questa estate" (Nicod. to Sforza, May 2, 1453, Orig., No. 1586, vol. iv. f. 202).

for all but his intimate friend, the Milanese ambassador, Nicodemo Tranchedini.¹ This was clear enough. He was willing that the matter should be settled, provided that the commons² advanced the money; but the commons urged the necessity of reserving the subsidy for King René,³ and the malcontents complained that each fresh sacrifice would only serve as advances to increase the credit of the Medici's bank.⁴

These miserable negotiations lasted the entire winter. Finally, assured an annual grant of 80,000 florins, Sforza in the spring sent his brother Alessandro to join Sigismondo Malatesta, who was besieging Foiano for the Florentines.⁵ Foiano was taken, sacked, and burnt (August 11),⁶ and submission speedily followed terror.⁷ They might have extended their march upon Sienna, and punished her for her friendly relations with Naples; but Cosimo resisted the temptation, and he was seconded by Neri Capponi, then captain at Pistoia. There was little security for Florence in any case, whether Sienna went to Alphonsus or Alphonsus came to her.⁸

Less perilous was the acquisition of the county of Bagno, which circumstances offered to the Florentines. This is the most striking fact of this pointless war. The county of Bagno lay in a little valley near the source of the stream of Savio,

¹ "Volsono essere cum M^{co} Cosimo per respondermi et non possetero, perchè hogi ha preso medicina et non ha voluto altri che me" (Nicod. to Sforza, May 3, 1453, Orig., No. 1586, f. 202).

² "So stato cum Cosimo mo mo a solo a solo, e confortatolo che facia siate aiutato dal comune et che non facendolo del comune bixogna facia del suo. Assay se torse, pur non me taglia al tuto la speranza, et comprehendo voria farvi dare dal comune parecchie migliara de fiorini, et che se remetesse a V. S. che mandasse quale e quante gente ve piacesse" (Nicod. to Sforza, May 2, 1453, Orig., No. 1586, f. 202).

³ *Ibid.*, May 8, 1453, f. 204.

⁴ "Ce sono molti che dicono damo che queste provisione se fano a nostra instantia et per assicurar Cosimo de quel ve ha prestato e intende prestare. La impossibilità et disordine loro ve nocene" (*Ibid.*, May 26, 1453, f. 209).

⁵ Simoneta, xxi. 633.

⁶ Cambi, *Del.*, xx. 314; Boninsegni, p. 106.

⁷ Poggio, xx. 431; Fazio, l. x. p. 167; Ammirato, xxii. 73.

⁸ G. Capponi, ii. 56.

that may almost be called a river, since it flows into the sea.¹ Situated between the Casentino and the States of the Church, this miniature state belonged to Gherardo Gambacorti, a son of the last chief of the Pisan Republic, who had sold his country to the Florentines in 1406, and had received this compensation and reward. The discords and hatreds of the Albizzi and the Medici, found sympathy here, for Gherardo was Rinaldo's brother-in-law, and, in consequence, not particularly attached to Cosimo and the new masters, who had exiled all the illustrious families of the defeated party. Taking advantage of this fact, Alphonsus offered Gherardo a much larger fief in his own kingdom than the county of Bagno, one of the objects of his policy being to obtain a footing in Tuscany.

The Florentines having got wind of the negotiation, Gherardo handed them up his son of fourteen as a hostage to soothe them; but his paternal treachery² did not prevent him from continuing the secret understanding, and on August 12, 1453, Fra Puccio, Knight of St. John of Jerusalem, and the King's lieutenant, appeared with an army before Corzano, the principal fortress of the county. The drawbridge was lowered already, when a Pisan, forgetting the past, and, like many others, preferring the protection of Florence to foreign rule, thrust out the vile Gambacorti, raised the bridge, and waved aloft the Florentine flag. Thus was the stroke parried, and the partisans of the Republic became its subjects; the county was turned into a viceregency, and the disgraced Gambacorti withdrew with the Neapolitan army, lucky enough that the victors, in their clemency, sent him back his son, who was imprisoned in the *Stinche*.³

This, however, was only an accident of fortune, a brilliant episode. The chief interest was the events in Lombardy,

¹ In the neighbourhood of Cesena, between Cervia and Ravenne.

² Boninsegni, p. 105.

³ Cambi, *Del.*, xx. 313; Boninsegni, p. 104; Bonincontri, xxi. 157; Machiavelli, vi. 97 B; Ammirato, xxii. 76.

and the part that France would play if she decided to play any. Venice had in her pay nearly all the condottieri; and the question was, seeing the facility with which the condottieri yielded to higher pay, whether Charles VII. would outbid her. But Charles was in no hurry, and counselled patience. He informed the Florentines that he had “*délibéré et conclud envoyer présentement aucuns de nos chiefs, nos parens et autres, bien accompaignez de gens de guerre en bon nombre, es marches et lieux où nostre dit cousin (le Comte Francisque) nous a fait savoir.*”¹ A month later he told this same cousin that he would come himself and “*join his army, already upon the banks of the Saone and the Rhone, and help to fight the Duke of Savoy in case he attacked Milan or Florence, which it was to be hoped he would not do, neither he nor the people drawn into his alliance,*” who had been deterred from any engagement by this military demonstration.² However, he found the engagement sufficient, and afterwards refused to have anything more to do with the matter, contenting himself with supporting the cause by putting forward René “*King of Sicily*” and the Dauphin, in whose hands he left everything.³

Thus any advantage to be gained from France depended upon René. On April 11, 1453, Acciajuoli concluded an understanding with him at Tours by which he engaged himself in the following June in the service of Milan and Florence, with at least 2400 horse, to take command of the entire army. Florence was to allow him 10,000 florins in gold a month, and a month's pay in advance for his travelling expenses, as soon as he should reach Asti or Alexandria. If he wished to break this engagement, he was to give two months' notice, and if he recrossed the Alps he was to leave his son, the Duke of Calabria, in his place upon the same conditions. As for the

¹ July 17, 1452. Mehun-sur-Yèvre. Text published by Desjardins, i. 73. The passage quoted is on page 74.

² August 31, 1452, Bourges. Text in Desjardins, i. 75. Cf. Lecoy de la Marche, i. 271.

³ Ang. Acciajuoli to Sforza, April 21, 1453, Orig., No. 1586, f. 79.

seat of war, it was to be decided by the three allies by a majority of two against one.¹

If this were sharp practice, the guilty parties were not René and Charles VII., for, according to the terms of the treaty, Cosimo and Sforza, constituting a majority, could refuse to co-operate in the conquest of the kingdom. It needed the absurd naïveté of René to imagine that, as chief of the army, he would have the right to lead it whither he willed. The wily Florence, understanding this, broke out upon the news of the treaty² into wild enthusiasm, which was soon changed into feverish impatience. René was to arrive on the 5th of May,³ and on the 10th he was still expected, whereupon urgent messages were sent to him to hurry.⁴ An ambassador went to meet him at Milan, and Sforza was warned that if before November there was no decisive result, the exhausted Republic would be compelled to seek other means of salvation.⁵

Cosimo, like the rest of the world, was beginning to doubt the reality of this French intervention, which upset the political situation, and placed France with Milan, Genoa and Venice with Alphonsus.⁶ Nevertheless, there was no reason to doubt. René had already crossed the Alps, where, upon the other side, the Duke of Savoy and the Marquis of Montferrat refused to let him pass. From Sisteron he wrote to Sforza that he was ashamed of the rebuff, and hoped soon to speak with him nearer.⁷

Machiavelli attributes to the Florentine ambassador, who

¹ *Capitula cum Rege Renato*, Arch. Sforz., Orig., No. 1586, f. 80. This document was published by M. Lecoy de la Marche, App., No. 28, ii. 265, from the archives of the Bouches-du-Rhône, B. 673.

² Boninsegni, p. 102.

³ Doc. shown in Desjardins, i. 77.

⁴ *Lettere della Sign.* Reg. xxxvii. f. 77, in Lecoy de la Marche, App., No. 30, ii. 271. Evidently the letters of 5th and 10th May crossed.

⁵ July 6, 1453. Doc. shown in Desjardins, i. 77.

⁶ "El qual Re fece quello che mai nessuno poteva credere che mai venisse da Francia in Lombardia con gente" (*Ist. Bresc.*, xxi. 883).

⁷ July 4, 1453. Text in bad Italian, published by Lecoy de la Marche, App. No. 31, ii. 272, from the archives of Milan, *Carteggio de' principi*.

was then at Milan, the stratagem of René's return to Provence that he might enter Lombardy from the sea.¹ Certain it is that this crownless King selected the more practicable if longer route,² with the intention of helping the Dauphin Louis as he passed through Genoa. The latter, anxious to get back to France to continue his shady intrigues, would not, however, turn a deaf ear to the cry of the Genoese exiles, who offered to become his subjects; he counted on helping them through his uncle René, to whom he made over his troops,³ or through Venice, who kept aloof in the matter.⁴ On the one side the Venetians were accused of ill-will, and on the other excused for want of resources; René for his part was dissatisfied, and regarded himself as tricked by the Dauphin.⁵

Perhaps he was, but he had lost the ardour of youth, and no longer hoped to reign in Naples. Through weak good-nature he wasted precious time in the Alps in the endeavour to reconcile the Marquis of Montferrat and the Duke of Milan.⁶

The successes of this war were rather fatal than useful,⁷ partly through the cruel and brutal massacres of the French in the towns they captured,⁸ and their numberless depredations

¹ Machiavelli, vi. 98 A.

² "Messer Benedetto Doria . . . dice come le gente dal Re Renato, sono tucte passate" (Nic. Soderini to the Ten of War, August 22, 1453; *Arch. Fir.*, cl. x., Dist. 2, filza 22, in Buser, App., p. 384).

³ "Et con esse circa dua mila cavagli et tre mila fanti delle genti del Dalfino et sono venuti in Asti" (*Ibid.* Cf. Doc. of August 23, 1453, analysed by Desjardins, i. 77).

⁴ *Lettere alla Sign.*, xxii. f. 294, 306; *Lettere della Sign.*, xlvii. f. 70, 97; Arch. of the Bouches-du-Rhône, B. 14, f. 126 v°; Arch. of Venice, *Libri partium Secretarum*, xix. f. 211, deliberation of August 31, 1453; Lecoy de la Marche, i. 277.

⁵ "Il re Renato è stato e sta molto disperato et di mala voglia, et pargli che insino ad qui el abbia ingannato, et che questa sua passata debba turbare et guastare tucti i disegni suoi et della vostra lega . . . et dolsesi della mala conditione et cattiva dispositione et animo del Dalfino. . . . In verità universalmente a ognuno dispiace più per la natura et conditione et povertà del Dalfino" (Nic. Soderini to the Ten, *loc. cit.*).

⁶ His sentence was on the 15th September 1453. See Simoneta, xxi. 649; *Ist. Bresc.*, xxi. 883; Benvenuto de San Giorgio, *Hist. Montisferrati*, xxiii. 731.

⁷ They can be seen in Sismondi, vi. 252 *sq.*, and Lecoy de la Marche, i. 278 *sq.*

⁸ Simoneta (xxi. 656), *Ist. Bresc.* (xxi. 884), Sanuto (xxii. 1147), Fazio (l. x. p. 173), give the results of the taking of Pontevecico by the French, and the retaliation of Sforza's soldiers.

in the enforced idleness of an exceptionally prolonged and harsh winter. Sforza, whose soldiers disseminated hatred in retaliation, was reduced from policy to defend René, "who had come so far at considerable expense, too late, no doubt, but that by no fault of his own, and who greatly benefited the league."¹ Each one had his private thoughts and accounts to reckon. Florence, who spent 70,000 florins a month,² held to her resolve to know the reason if everything were not settled by November;³ she begged the Pope to open negotiations,⁴ then warned René,⁵ and refused him both the money he claimed, like a second Sforza, and winter quarters in Tuscany, reminding him that for him as well as for the Republic the seat of war was Lombardy.⁶ The peaceful monarch readily understood; it seemed a wise precaution to him to give up his allies before they gave him up. But this was too soon for them. Sforza endeavoured to retain him, and Florence repented of her inflexibility. Her ambassadors in Lombardy offered him 36,000 ducats to be paid in three years; but he was deaf to all parties. He consented to leave them his son according to his engagement,⁷ but that was all. Bitten by love at the age of forty-five upon the simple sight of a portrait, he was dying to get back to France to marry Jeanne de Laval,⁸ and

¹ *Instructio spectabiliū militum et juris utriusque doctorum dominorum Seve de Curte et Jacobi de Trivulcio oratorum iturorum pro tractatu pacis Italie ad ex. comunitatem Florentinam*, October 21, 1453 (*Arch. Sforz.*, Orig., No. 1586, f. 232). This text is printed in Buser, App., p. 385.

² Boninsegni, p. 103.

³ See above, p. 116.

⁴ Lecoy de la Marche, i. 281.

⁵ Desjardins, i. 79.

⁶ "Perchè vi è dentro la riputazione maggiore della sua M. insieme col nostro bisogno" (*Lettere della Sign.*, xlvii. 207; in Lecoy de la Marche, i. 283).

⁷ Boninsegni, p. 108; Simoneta, xxi. 662; Machiavelli, vi. 98 B; Lecoy de la Marche, i. 283. According to Boninsegni, the Duke of Calabria was promised 1600 ducats a month more than his father. According to Machiavelli, Florence was delighted to get rid of René instead of anxious to retain him, seeing she had recovered her lands and lost castles, and she had no wish that Sforza should acquire further possessions out of Lombardy.

⁸ Simoneta, xxi. 662. He married her on September 10, 1454. See Lecoy de la Marche, i. 301.

he hurried off, burning with resentment against the faithless Duke of Milan, who had tricked him in his efforts to bring about a reconciliation between him and Venice.¹

Angelo Acciajuoli wrote from France that Charles VII. deplored the cowardice of his brother-in-law,² but the natural vexation of the Florentines renders this assertion extremely doubtful. However, the incident was soon forgotten. A graver event, the taking of Constantinople, whose consequences could not yet be measured, shook all minds. The Emperor Constantine Paleologos massacred with 40,000 Christians, and innumerable merchants of every country flung into prison, were cause enough for fear lest the unexhausted ambition of the Turks should lead them to carry out their threat of marching westward. So Charles VII. naturally shrunk from binding himself to Italy, upon whose shores the first waves of this new invasion would break. There was wisdom in the advice of Pope Nicholas V. and King John III. of Cyprus, that Christians should forget their miserable quarrels and unite against the Crescent.³ But whether from a feeling of the impotence of recent efforts, or from a consciousness that the talk of union upon the lips did not come from the heart, each state exacted exorbitant and unacceptable conditions. Sforza demanded that the Venetians should restore what they had taken, and that Alphonsus, who had attacked the Florentines *nullo jure*, should put down his arms; Alphonsus, that the Florentines should reimburse him the expenses of war; the Florentines, that he should return them Castiglione della Pescaia in Maremma.⁴

¹ *Giorn. Napol.*, xxi. 1131. Lecoy de la Marche (i. 285) says that the documents confirm the assertion of the *Giornali*, and he refuses to take love so seriously in a light and vain nature like René's. Perhaps he is right in disputing Simoneta that this was the sole reason: "Sola muliebri causa in tanta rerum mole movebatur" (Simoneta, xxi. 662).

² Vilità (Letter of June 17, 1454, published in Lecoy de la Marche, App., No. 38, ii. 279).

³ Epistoli Card. Tusculani, in Porcelli, *De Gestis Scipionis Piccinini*, xxv. 35, Bologna, July 13, 1453; Letter of the Signory to Nicholas V., Septem. 19, 1453, in Mas Latrie, *Hist. de Chypre*, vol. iii. p. 72, Paris, 1855, and G. Müller, *Docum. sulle Relazioni*, &c., p. 178.

⁴ Simoneta, xxi. 645, 666; Machiavelli, vi. 98 B.

The Florentines indeed promised Frederick III. to send an ambassador to the Diet of Ratisbon "to consider the question of an enterprise against the Turks,"¹ that is, to talk, but not to act. We may believe that even outside the walls Florence would be able to get out of the affair when we remember how easily she already had done so fifty years before; then she excused herself from helping Manuel Paleologos against Bajazet under the pretext that she herself was threatened by an Italian Bajazet, Gian Galeaz, a friend of the other.² But the Pope himself was not behind in crying "off." He wanted to build; so peace was necessary to him, and peace with him meant war in Italy: this was why he showed no great zeal in reconciling the contradictory pretensions of the congress he had established in Rome, and kept the negotiations hanging.³

The Venetians alone saw matters clearly. Anticipating nothing from this futile congress, they concluded a peace with Sforza at Lodi (April 9, 1454), to which they invited all Italy.⁴ A scandal ensued. Two of the disputants forced their will upon the others. The Pope was annoyed; the King of Naples refused to listen to anybody for six days; he reviled the Venetians above all for the scant courtesy they had shown him, causing him at the same time an expense of 150,000 ducats.⁵ Cosimo shared his feelings; Sforza had forsaken him without helping him to reconquer Lucca, according to his promise; but on this occasion he was at variance with his countrymen, who wanted peace at any price, to balance their budget. Hurt by their joy, he suggested objections that gave

¹ Letter of the 27th February 1454, in G. Müller, p. 179.

² "Imminet nobis italicus Baisettus, illius vestri persecutoris amicus" (Letter of August 29, 1401, in G. Müller, p. 148).

³ Simoneta, xxi. 666; Giannozzo Manetti, R. I. S., iii. part 2, p. 943. This last author is a eulogist of Nicholas V.

⁴ Simoneta, xxi. 669; Sabellico, Dec. iii. l. vii. p. 707; *Ist. Bresc.*, xxi. 887; Neri Capponi, xviii. 1215; Boninsegni, p. 109; Machiavelli, vi. 98 B; Ammirato, xxii. 78. The treaty is in Du Mont, iii. part 1, p. 202; and there are a number of copies in the *Arch. Sforz.*, Orig., No. 1586, f. 250-270.

⁵ Nicodemo to Sforza, May 6, 1454, Orig., No. 1586, f. 277, and Buser, App., p. 288.

rise to long and numerous debates, but the impulse was irresistible, and on the 23rd April the Republic acceded to the treaty.¹ John of Calabria, whom Florence had received with open arms,² and from whom much was expected, should have left for France, but he remained a whole year in Tuscany to conceal his vexation, and above all, to recover the promised pay. He received it to the last penny, as well as a present of 20,000 florins and 97 pounds of silver plate.³ After all, it might be necessary to turn to the lords of the fleur-de-lis later.

Other allies were not long wanting.⁴ Only Alphonsus raised some difficulties,⁵ but he gave his adhesion on the 26th January 1455.⁶ On February 10, a few days later, he solicited of Florence the pardon of some exiles, amongst whom were the traitor Gherardo Gambacorti and Ormanno de Rinaldo des Albizzi.⁷ Thus we behold the head of the eldest son of the proud and fiery Rinaldo bent before him who had proscribed his family, and bowed in vain, for Cosimo refused to revoke his sentence of exile.⁸

With a crusade against the Turks in prospect, this treaty of peace was concluded. Its importance was immense, since all

¹ Du Mont, vol. iii. part 1, p. 206; Neri Capponi, xviii. 1215. This clear and accurate writer stops here. He died at Florence, November 23, 1457, aged seventy-nine, of a tumour in the arm. Platina, *Vita di Neri Capponi*, R. I. S., xx. 516.

² Ammirato, xxii. 78.

³ He returned to France in May 1455. Cambi, *Del.*, xx. 333; Ammirato, xxii. 81.

⁴ The allies and friends of Florence joined on May 14, 1454; the allies of Venice on June 4. See Du Mont, vol. iii. part 1, p. 207, 209. Genoa joined in May. See Boninsegni, p. 109. Details of the rest in Du Mont, *loc. cit.*, and Cipolla, p. 445.

⁵ "El Re dicea voler ratificare, ma che volia più termine per poter meglio intendere el facto suo" (Nicod. to Sforza, May 6, 1454, Orig., No. 1586, f. 277, and Buser, App., p. 388).

⁶ *Cron. d'Agobbio*, xxi. 989; Platina, xx. 857; Sanuto, xxii. 1152; Navagero, xxiii. 1117; Poggio, xx. 434.

⁷ Doc. in *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., iv. part 1, p. 426. In this collection the document is dated 1454, but this is evidently an error, referable to the old style.

⁸ This refusal is the result of what has been already said upon the subject of the destiny of this family. See chap. i. p. 36, 37.

the Italian powers subscribed to it and were jointly responsible for it. But when it came to a question of starting the crusade, each one backed out. Nine days after this engagement Venice bound herself to Mahomet II., in virtue of the Venetian adage, "*Siamo Veneziano, poi Cristiani.*" Florence only thought of her finances. She promised Frederick III. to send a delegate to the Diet that would be held towards Michaelmas, not at Ratisbon, but at Frankfort or at Nuremberg;¹ she promised support to Thomas Paleologos, the despôt of the Morea, but on condition that the principal potentates of Europe should take up arms.² When the Turks were beaten without her assistance, she testified her joy by bonfires, processions, and "sacrifices;" she offered up vows for the expulsion of the entire infidel and impious race.³ If the King of Naples would undertake the war, she would receive and revictual his navy; if necessary, she would even join in the expedition, upon condition that the Pope would only fix her responsibilities according to her forces.⁴ If we would measure the meaning of mere talk, we have but to examine another document preceding these big protestations by a few months. On the 3rd December 1455, the Republic thanked Mahomet II. for his friendly treatment of the Florentine merchants, begged him to grant them free access to his dominions, and called him, without haggling, "*serenissime atque invictissime princeps et excellentissime domine.*"⁵ Venice had gone still further, but

¹ August 29, 1454. Doc. in G. Müller, p. 180. See above, same chapter, p. 120.

² "Nos semper paratos fore pro posse nostro ad fidelium christianorum defensionem, cum videbimus eos qui in hac re principes esse debent et ad quos hoc opus precipue spectare videtur, separare et arma capere ad refrenandam et opprimendam potentiam Theucrorum (*sic*)." Doc. in G. Müller, p. 182. In *Arch. Sforz.*, Orig., No. 1587, f. 18, a copy may be seen of the league concluded at Venice, August 30, 1454, against the Turks.

³ September 13, 1456. Doc. in G. Müller, p. 184.

⁴ "In animo habemus huic pie expeditioni pro facultate nostra et viribus subsidia ministrare. Verumtamen que et qualia illa futura sint, et quid comparatione aliarum potentiarum italicarum suppeditare valeamus, discretioni summi pontificis relinquimus, cui vires nostre notissime sunt" (September 12, 1456. Doc. in G. Müller, p. 183).

⁵ Doc. in G. Müller, p. 182.

her jealous rival only sought to imitate her in the interests of her trade.

Nobody could justly throw the first stone at her. Selfish interest was the general law, and Christian fervour was a thing of the past. Mediæval heroism and faith were dead. Charles VII. did not even allow the Bull for the crusade to be published in his kingdom. Rather than pay the tithe for its support, the French clergy called a new Council. The chivalrous Duke of Burgundy, Philip the Good, after having sworn by God and the Virgin Mary, by woman and the pheasant, that he would march against the infidel,¹ left his vow, which he had published throughout Europe, unfulfilled. The King of Portugal acted no better. Spain held aloof, engaged with her Moors. Germany and England had each their separate reasons or pretexts for remaining inactive, and so we see the end of one world and the birth of another, which will have its own greatness and glory, but whose beginning is as repulsive as it was laborious.

¹ Olivier de la Marche, *Mémoires*, chap. xxx., in the collection Michaud and Poujoulat, vol. iii. p. 489.

CHAPTER V.

LAST YEARS OF COSIMO.

1454-1464.

Cosimo's absolute rule under a modest appearance—Complicated proceedings of the Government—Policy of peace based upon Sforza's alliance—Causes of dissatisfaction : self-interest, harsh measures, and pecuniary obligations—Vicissitudes of Giannozzo Manetti—Division in Cosimo's party—Apparent neutrality of Cosimo—Re-establishment of lot-drawing (February 23, 1454)—Conspiracy of Piero des Ricci (September 3, 1457)—Death of Neri Capponi (November 1457)—New *catasto* (January 11, 1458)—Reactionary attempts : Matteo Bartoli (March 1458), Luca Pitti (July)—Secret complicity of Cosimo—Meeting of Parliament (August 11)—Creation of a new *balie*—The suspects exiled—Material improvements—Honours awarded the diminished popular power—The importance and abuse of Luca Pitti's power—Galeaz Maria Sforza at Florence (April 17, 1459)—Arrival of Pius II. (April 25)—Public rejoicings—Death of St. Antoninus (May 10)—*Buonumini di San Martino*—Equivocal attitude of Cosimo between the houses of Aragon and Anjou (1461), and with Sforza (1461)—The sorrows of Cosimo's last years—His death (August 1, 1464)—The judgment of his contemporaries and of immediate posterity—Cosimo's liberality—His constructions—Protection granted to letters, arts, and trades—Moral decline of Florence.

THE four previous chapters ought to prove the inaccuracy of the general opinion that the history of Florence presents no interest apart from the Medici. On the contrary, with them the interest diminishes. The miserable intrigues of foreign policy, the ineffectual wars upon a vast field, where the Florentines disappear as lost, are less interesting than the struggles of the democracy for sheer life upon a narrow but nearer field, and of the oligarchy for domination. At home the interest is not greater. We have seen Cosimo's severity upon his triumphal return from exile, unpleasant because it was without excuse ; now we will examine his selfish, crafty, and hypocritical government to the end, and we shall find nothing but his protection of letters and arts to justify the esteem

which the lies and reticence of his courtiers exacted from posterity.

It is asserted that in Florence he was the first citizen. So was Augustus in Rome. Trustworthy testimony proves that he ruled as a tyrant. No witness had greater opportunity for impartial judgment than Æneas Sylvius, the great Pope Pius II. He writes that Cosimo was all-powerful, the sole arbitrator of peace and war and of laws; that in his house the affairs of the Republic and the choice of public officers were decided; that all he wanted as a king were the name and the pomp.¹ If he had neither court nor guard, if, he exacted no exterior mark of respect and subjection; if with calculated modesty,² he pretended to regard himself as the equal of his countrymen; if he, like his sons, intrigued by chance for the various offices of state, and permitted protestations, prayers, and thanks to be addressed to the Signory, their presentation depended upon his good-will.³ "Whenever you want anything before others," we read in one of Nicodemo Tranchedini's despatches, "write secretly to Cosimo, and you will always obtain it. Popular government is not like any other, and Cosimo cannot always be in the palace, as in former times."⁴ Suffering from gout, he often received in bed in

¹ "Nihil Cosmæ negatum. Is belli pacisque judex et legum moderator, non tam civis quam patriæ dominus haberi; consilium de Rep. domi suæ agitari; magistratum hi gerere quos ipse designasset. Nihil sibi ad regnum, nisi nomen et pompa, deesset" (*Pii II. Pontificis Commentarii Rerum Memorabilium*, l. ii. p. 50, Frankfort, 1614).

² "Non laxo Cosimo che dire, benchè modestamente . . . qui se scandalizò quanto may più el vedessi quantunche modestissimamente come sole" (Nicodemo to Sforza, 11th May and 9th October 1463, Orig., No. 1589, f. 138 and 243). Such phrases are frequent in Nicodemo's despatches.

³ "Poy andaray ad Fiorenza et te ritrovaray con el Meo Cosmo . . . et poy, parendo ad Cosmo, te ritrovaray con li Signori. Dicendo più et meno ad essi Signori de le cose soprascripte como parirà ad esso Cosmo" (Sforza's instructions to Prospero de Camulio, April 21, 1457, Orig., No. 1587, f. 168, and Copies, No. 1604, f. 316). "Subgionsi . . . como non deliberavate parlassi cum la Signoria, sed cum privati cittadini, se non quanto, como et quando paresse ad sua magnificentia" (Nicod. to Sforza, March 5, 1463, Orig., No. 1589, f. 121).

⁴ "Quando volete più una cosa che un' altra, scriviate secretamente ad Cosimo el parer o desiderio vostro, et luy ve lo adapterà sempre, et non state in sul dire :

his own room, or in his son Piero's, who was also gouty and sometimes bedridden like his father: here they received Nicodemo, his sons, his brother, Luca Pitti, and a few other intimate advisers. Cosimo would either speak last to end the debate¹ or disdainfully start the discussion, knowing none would dispute with him.² Henceforth it was clear that everything depended upon him.³ Later on, a shameless eulogist wrote in his manuscript *Ricordi*, "Cosimo was everything to Florence, and without him Florence was nothing."⁴ This clear-sighted individual had not, however, seen the despatches in which Nicodemo wrote likewise, "Cosimo does everything, and without him nothing is done."⁵

Now Cosimo only worked for himself. This hard nature was solely animated by the spirit of selfishness; but such was his prudence, so crooked were his ways, that he managed to make it acceptable, or rather to conceal it. He would convoke a commission of thirty or thirty-five citizens and expound to them the question under discussion, but the truth, hidden from them, was only revealed to seven or eight of his creatures.⁶ Resolute to keep the exiles out of their country, he nevertheless allowed them to hope.⁷ To Luca Pitti, one of those who

io voria intendere da loro, etc., perochè . . . li governi popolari sono alieni et diformi da l'altri, et non pò Cosimo continuamente esser in palazzo, et far como solia" (Nic. to Sforza, April 4, 1458, Orig., No. 1588, f. 50). "Io curo poco el dire de l'altri; ma Cosimo . . ." (August 15, 1463, *ibid.*, No. 1589, f. 189).

¹ Nicod. to Sforza, March 10, 1463, Orig., No. 1589, f. 123.

² August 15, 1463, *ibid.*, f. 189.

³ "Le altre cose che diremo di sotto diray solamente ad Cosmo et non ad altri" (*Instructions to Prospero de Camulio*, April 21, 1457, Copies, No. 1604, f. 316).

⁴ "Cosimo in somma era tutto in Firenze, e, senza lui, Firenze era un niente; e benchè il desiderio d'un buon cittadino sia di non poter più che tutta la Rep., tuttavia il suo potere non era chi l'uguagliasse" (Bibl. Nat., MS. Ital., No. 348, f. 28 v°).

⁵ "Cosimo che guida tuto" (Nicodemo to Sforza, July 15, 1458, Orig., No. 1588, f. 94). "Sine ipso factum est nihil" (*ibid.*, July 2, 1464, Orig., No. 1590, f. 262).

⁶ "Ad quali se diria el vero" (Nic. to Sforza, March 18, 1462, Orig., No. 1589, f. 52).

⁷ See the curious *Lettere di una Gentildonna*, and those completed by M. Guasti.

was on the look-out for perilous dignities, he said, "You pursue the infinite, whereas I look for the finite. Your ladders reach heaven, and mine lean upon earth that I may not fall on the other side."¹ He wished to pass for more modest than he was, but self-betrayal is unavoidable. Everywhere he introduced the balls that figure in the arms of the Medici, even in places least likely to be so decorated.² This is no exaggeration of Cavalcanti, prompted by hate. This queer historian, who, while admitting that Cosimo was blamed for beginning a palace that would cost more to build than the Coliseum of Rome, that it is easy enough to build sumptuous palaces with other people's gold, and that the taxes went to fill his private purse, notes apologetically that "nobody complained when this same individual supplied Florence with far more money than he received from her."³

Cosimo's strength lay in money, even when there was none. He remained a merchant and banker, widening his business, creating or impelling the creation and development of several banks and establishments to correspond with his own, such as the houses of the Sassi, the Portinari, the Benci, and the Tornabuoni,⁴ into which last family he married his son Piero, as we have seen. He understood that states are strengthened by increasing the number of those who have interests to protect, and who dread revolutions; he was skilful in gilding the pill for them, and herein lay his superiority over the other lesser tyrants of Italy.

Not having an army, like them, he needed an ally from whom to borrow one, and such an ally he found in Francesco

¹ Vespasiano, *Vita di Cosimo*, c. 19, *Spicil. Rom.*, i. 343. These proposals are also reported at fuller length in the *Lettere di una Gentildonna*, p. 270. Vespasiano, correctness itself, does not name Luca; with his habitual tact, he says, "Uno de' principali."

² "Egli ha pieno per insino i privati de' frati delle sue palle" (Cavalcanti, *Sec. Storia*, c. 33, ii. 210).

³ "Ma niuna cosa dicevano quando quell' uomo sovveniva il comune di molto più somme che quelle non erano" (*Sec. Stor.*, c. 33, p. 211).

⁴ G. Capponi, ii. 64. See Reumont, *Lorenzo de' Medici*, c. vi. vol. i. p. 137 sq.; *Suprematie Cosimo's de' Medici bis zur Verfassungsreform Luca Pitti's*.

Sforza. "The Florentines and Sforza are one and the same thing,"¹ said the King of Naples. Sforza was not a whit behind Cosimo in knowing what he was about. Who else could and was willing to yield to his incessant and large demands for money?² On both sides self-interest cemented and made the alliance durable, in spite of its drawbacks for the Florentines, whose self-respect it wounded, and whose internal dissatisfaction it awakened and inflamed.

Despots are wise in seeking to divert the minds of their subjects by the troubles of war. No longer having the battlefield to rain their gold upon, the people of Florence stood with their eyes fixed upon the Government that was exhausting and unjustly using them. They perceived that the fleeting Signories, leaving office, selected their successors, and left nothing to chance. But the murmurers were deprived of employment, stripped, and exiled, and an abettor of the Medici declares that the Eight of the guard had the right to their blood.³ If a humane law were proposed granting the emigrants freedom to return to their country upon condition of paying four florins a year each, Cosimo opposed it, not willing to have his enemies upon his hands. The emigrants were numerous and reduced to want; the stationer, Vespasiano, a great admirer of Cosimo, tells us of a daughter of Rinaldo des Albizzi, and daughter-in-law of Rinaldo Gianfigliuzzi, who, with her son, forsaken in exile, thought herself happy in obtaining a few ducats in alms.⁴ So great was the ill-will cherished for the master by his harsh and invincible opposition, that one night the gates of his palace were smeared with blood.⁵

¹ "Perchel sa (Alfonse) che Fiorentini sono una cosa medesima cum la S. V." (Antonio de Tricio to Sforza, Naples, April 29, 1456, Orig., No. 1587, f. 120).

² The registers of the *Archivio Sforzesco* are full of Sforza's demands for money, Nicodemo's negotiations to obtain it, and Cosimo's curious bargainings with public supplies. It is easy to understand Sforza's attachment to such an obliging ally.

³ Nerli, *Comment.*, l. iii. p. 45.

⁴ Vespasiano, *Vita d'Antonio Cincinello*, c. 13; *Spicil. Rom.*, i. 544.

⁵ G. Capponi, ii. 50.

Neither was he pardoned the renewed excess of his monetary charges, all the more intolerable because of an uninterrupted famine.¹ In the first twenty years of the unacknowledged reign of the Medici, seventy-seven houses of Florence paid 4,875,000 florins in extraordinary and arbitrary taxes.² From 1442 to 1446 twenty-four taxes were raised, one half of which, in the year 1442, produced the sum of 180,000 florins.³ In 1452 a *balie* was named for five years, and one of its uses was to impose and levy taxes.⁴ It is true war compelled them, but they were heavy. Boninsegni, as we have seen,⁵ brought the monthly expenses up to 70,000 florins. The *balie* lost no time levying two taxes of 580,000 and 300,000 florins, of which 50,000 were upon persons until then legally exempt. But even after the pretext of hostilities had ceased, the exactions continued, and were no less shocking. "We do nothing but pay," writes Alessandra Macinghi Strozzi, "although we have peace and tranquillity. It is wonderful how we are bled. Truly we have nothing more to give."⁶ This energetic woman sold all she possessed, and went into voluntary exile with her sons.⁷

If there were any laws in financial matters, they were few and vague, and constantly misapplied; there was only one law for the assessors—their own pleasure, or rather Cosimo's. What an admirable way of reducing his enemies and making

¹ "La carestia è qui continuamente" (Nicod. to Sforza, February 19, 1459, Orig., No. 1588, f. 223).

² Alessandra Macinghi speaks of a tax which he calls the *albitro*, because it was arbitrarily imposed upon the citizens, or, as Varchi says (*Stor. Fior.*, l. xiii. vol. iii. p. 32, Flor. 1838), "per coniettura di quel che eglino potevano guadagnare l'anno coll' industria loro." Varchi wrongly believes that this tax dates from 1508. See *Lettere di una Gentildonna*, August 24, 1447, p. 7, No. 1.

³ Cavalcanti, *Sec. Stor.*, c. 28, ii. 198.

⁴ Ammirato, xxii. 72.

⁵ See preceding chap., p. 118.

⁶ "Mai s'ha a fare altro che pagar catasti, che se fussi punto di sospetto di guerra, sarèno disfatti, tanti se ne paga ora che la terra è in pace e tranquilla; per molti altro non si può fare" (April 21, 1464). "E un miracolo e danari si pagano" (January 12, 1465. *Lettere di una Gentildonna*, Nos. 31 and 40, p. 293, 355).

⁷ She finally renounced the idea, though her sons shared it (see *Lettere di una Gentildonna*, note to Letter 15, p. 164).

them creatures of his will! Prayers for reduction were showered upon him. To side with Cosimo, which was called *aver lo stato*, meant slight taxation; to side against him was simple ruin. The rich but crushed family of the Pazzi only began to breathe when they had allied themselves by marriage with the Medici, and from that day they breathed freely, and were numbered with the favourites.¹ As for the victims, they were innumerable. One example will suffice.

Though not immensely wealthy, Giannozzo Manetti had won a position of esteem and consideration.² At the age of twenty-five he left the bank to devote himself to study, only sleeping five hours, and not leaving his quarter of the town for nine years, not even to cross the Arno.³ Gifted with an astonishing memory, as Vespasiano tells us, he learnt Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. In public offices and upon embassies his eloquence was celebrated. At Venice, Genoa, Naples, and Rome he was received like a prince of the blood. While he spoke, King Alphonsus seemed turned to stone. When he was sent to address Nicholas V. upon his elevation, the new Pope listened to him so attentively, that a prelate seated near him repeatedly touched his elbow, imagining he had fallen asleep, while the Venetian ambassador wrote to the Council of Ten that the honour of their Republic demanded that no less an orator should be sent by them to the Holy See. In this corrupt century he enjoyed, like Coluccio Salutati and Palla Strozzi, an extraordinary reputation for honesty.⁴ But

¹ Vespasiano, *Vita di Piero de' Pazzi*, c. 2; *Spicil. Rom.*, i. 486.

² Born at Florence in 1396, died in 1459. He will be mentioned again in following chapter as a man of letters.

³ Vespasiano, *Vita di G. Manetti*, sec. 2; *Spicil. Rom.*, i. 579.

⁴ *Ibid.*, and sections following. Cf. Villari, *N. Machiavelli*, i. 127. Manetti's style of oratory appears to-day swollen and false. His works, histories, biographies, and translations are an improvement. A few other honest men could be named, but not many. Vespasiano praises Zambrino de Pistoia, who not only taught etters but morals, who gave away all to the poor, and lived like a hermit (*Vita di Zembrino*, canon of Pistoia, sec. 1; *Spicil. Rom.*, i. 655), and the learned Florentine Paolo, who slept upon boards beside his writing-table, fed upon herbs and fruit, and had never approached a woman (*Vita di Maestro Pagolo*, secs. 1, 2; *Spicil. Rom.*, i. 660-662).

he committed the crime of differing from Cosimo in politics, of reproaching him with the quarrel with Venice, and of even striving to bring about a reconciliation. Sent to Rome two years later, he negotiated with the Venetian ambassador for the consent of the two Republics to the general peace that Nicholas V. wished to procure.

As punishment, Cosimo resolved to ruin him by taxes. He had already paid 135,000 florins; he was taxed to 166, that is to say, he had to pay 5312 a year.¹ To meet this obligation, he was forced to sell a part of his credit on the *monte*; where he had paid a 100, he received 10½. At last he took refuge with the Pope, who was kindly disposed towards him, and provided him with employment and an income.

When Cosimo saw him sheltered from his attacks, he informed him that it only depended on himself to return to favour; the tax-malady, so he said, was not mortal.² But Giannozzo knew his man and would have nothing to do with him. Then Luca Pitti, who had raised the tax, played his great game; Manetti was bidden to present himself upon a certain day, in default of which he would be declared a rebel. This meant confiscation of his property. But Manetti was equal to the occasion. He obtained letters of credit as ambassador from the Holy See, which he might present upon necessity. According to custom, these letters ought to have been guaranteed by a safe-conduct from Cosimo, which he did not receive. However, so much he left to chance, and his letters of credit were of sufficient value. "If I had served my Creator," he said in his audience of the Priors, "with so much fidelity and love as I have served the Republic, I should think myself at St. John the Baptist's feet. Your lordships are aware of the reward I have received."

This was an audacious start, but Manetti could risk it.

¹ Vespasiano, *Vita di G. Manetti*, sec. 28; *Spicil. Rom.*, i. 607.

² *Ibid.* Vespasiano, Cosimo's great friend, does not credit him with this unworthy witticism. He says, "Uno de' principali," as with Luca Pitti. (See above, p. 127, No. 1.)

Behind him was the Pope, before him a people dissatisfied with their chiefs, and public opinion was in his favour. John of Calabria had just appeared in Tuscany. Upon the election of the Ten of War, Giannozzo received a large majority of the votes. "Such is the strength of virtue," was the comment. In times of war the principal officers¹ were openly elected by vote, a direct confession of the superiority of public choice to election by chance. Having honourably fulfilled his duties, Giannozzo preferred to return to Rome, finding life in his own country far from comfortable, and after the death of his protector, Nicholas V., he sought refuge with Alphonsus in Naples, where he ended his days.²

Thus, after twenty years of continued progress, at a time when the former malcontents were dead or forsaken, and their sons, grown up under the new regime, had come to regard it as the normal rule of their country, the Medici still found an opposition upon which it was sometimes necessary to count.³ After victory the victors are prone to divide, and if they find no formidable adversaries to deal with, imagine that they will never have any. Thanks to the elections *a mano*, or to the sorting and jobbing of the exchanges, the friends of the first rank transmitted their posts from one to another, and thus reconstituted an aristocracy. The friends of the second rank, left outside, were waiters upon providence, and undertook to re-establish their position by the aid of declared enemies, as little jealous as they of democratic freedom, whose ambition and hatred found a vent in high-sounding words.

The question in this struggle between the Cosimites was, for which party would Cosimo pronounce? There is no doubt that his own interest was to concentrate all power in the hands

¹ From 1434 to 1455 the *balie* was ten times imposed in all regular form, and by the vote of the councils (Machiavelli, vii. 102 A).

² October 26, 1459. Vespasiano, *Vita di G. Manetti*, c. 30-34; *Spicil. Rom.*, i. 609-613.

³ Ammirato (xxii. 62) speaks of an attempt in 1449 to substitute a secret for a public ballot, easier to in imitate and direct.

of a few lay figures animated by his will, but he whose policy always was to flatter the people could hardly oppose a reform evidently desired by them. Besides, it was not pleasant for the master to live surrounded by a little circle of friends to whom he owed his recall, and who, deeming themselves his equals, wished to share his power. He was not displeased to see them compromised and weakened, his own lavishness preserving him from their fate. The exchanges were full of trustworthy names. The only danger was when they should be exhausted, and until that day there was time to look abroad. It is sometimes wise to stand apart and let the stream flow by. During his exile Cosimo had been able to gauge his position in his own country. Without going away, he could resume the part of spectator, and leave his lieutenants, in pretended independence, to make a display of their incapacity and unpopularity, from which he alone had protected them: it would always be time enough to pronounce his *quos ego*, whether he tightened his purse-strings or exacted restitutions which there was always the hope of eluding; everybody was at his mercy. Absolute master in finances, he could in politics practise patience.

This was why he did not oppose the decision of the popular councils of the commons on February 23, 1454, which re-established the drawing of lots, the one by a majority of 218 votes against 22, the other by 169 against 7.¹ The figures are eloquent; they prove the public will, and help us to credit the burst of joy with which, according to several writers, they were greeted. It was thought that judgments and the distribution of taxes would escape the decision of interest and intrigue, and that it would no longer be necessary to purchase the favour of the ringleaders and friends of Cosimo by presents.²

“It was an honest and excellent thing,” wrote Giovanni

¹ Fil. Rinuccini, *Ricordi*, p. 85. Machiavelli (vii. 102 A) believes that Neri Capponi's death facilitated this reform. But this was in 1454, and Neri died in November 1457.

² Machiavelli, vii. 102 A.

later, "and if it could have been persevered in, the progress of tyranny would have been arrested."¹ But it was not persevered in. There was even an extraordinary delay in conforming to the decision reached. More than a year went by before the Signory was drawn for (July 1, 1455). But this did not diminish the popular joy.² The people are practised in long-suffering, and, as old Lancelot says, "they are often geese."³

As there were none of Cosimo's enemies named in the exchanges, only his friends were selected by the restored system of lot-drawing; but raised by a reaction, they were in consequence obliged more or less to represent or to serve it, and thus acquired a certain independence in their relations with their master; so that the friends of the first rank, without being quite excluded from office, lost the monopoly, and began to talk of even burning the exchanges of the Signory. It was Cosimo who prevented them (October 1457).⁴ Without acknowledging it, he liked this game of see-saw, that balanced and weakened the two classes of his partisans.

This rivalry, saved from excess by a powerful counterpoise, secured a short period of tranquillity to the Florentines. The few contemporary writers who have come down to us⁵ only speak of epidemics, earthquakes, cyclones, and inundations of the Arno.⁶ They scarcely mention the discovery of a conspiracy (September 3, 1457), at the head of which was one of those Ricci⁷ who had opened the road for the reigning family, and whose sole reward had been expulsion. Amongst other

¹ "La tratta a sorte fu chosa honesta e buona, se avessi seghuitato, che non sare multiprichato la tiranida" (Cambi, *Del.*, xx. 330).

² Ammirato, xxiii. 82.

³ See, under word *λάος*, *Jardin des racines grecques*, to-day unknown to school-boys.

⁴ Machiavelli, vii. 102 B; Ammirato, xxiii. 85.

⁵ Cavalcanti ends in 1447, Neri Capponi before 1457, Boninsegni in 1460. Cambi, Morelli, and Rinuccini, who continue to write, are extremely curt. The historian's only resource for those times is the more or less numerous documents published in latter days, and sometimes illuminated by judicious criticisms.

⁶ See Boninsegni, p. 116; Fil. Rinuccini, p. 86; and Cambi, *Del.*, xx. 338 *sq.*, a generation later.

⁷ Piero de-Giovacchino des Ricci.

conspirators, Alamanno des Adimari and Botticello, natural son of Niccolò Valori, saved their heads by flight; but Piero des Ricci paid for them all with his.¹ A doctor, Giovanni de Montecatini, was hanged and burnt, but rather as a heretic and wizard,² for having stoutly taught, in spite of remonstrance, that the soul dies with the body.³ Party quarrels had nothing to do with the affair. At heart sceptical and quite indifferent to form in religious matters, the Florentines were in perfect agreement upon those questions that inflamed the succeeding centuries.

Neri Capponi's death (November 1457) finished the split in the Cosimite party.⁴ Without possessing enormous wealth or being the chief of a faction, Neri had nevertheless been mixed up with everything in his country for forty years. He had inspired a corrupt and cowardly generation with confidence and respect by his disinterestedness and honesty, by his abilities as civil commissioner and as captain. Before Lucca and Piombino, as before Anghiari, he was the first. He was praised for having withheld his hand from a relation guilty of homicide—a good means of obtaining esteem, but certainly not of drawing partisans.⁵ Not being able to keep abreast of Cosimo, towards the end he was satisfied to walk behind him. Though never one of his intimates, no matter what Sismondi says, his acquiescence was always sought,⁶ and he covered everything with his unquestioned respectability.

But if it chanced that he had another opinion, and showed his disapproval, the malcontents seized upon him in spite of himself as a chief of the opposition, and a possible rival in

¹ September 16, according to Boninsegni (p. 119) and Fil. Rinuccini, p. 86; the 26th according to Ammirato (xxiii. 84), but this may be a printer's error. Cf. Cambi, *Del.*, xx. 350; Morelli, *Del.*, xix. 177.

² Morelli, *Del.*, xix. 174.

³ G. Capponi, ii. 65.

⁴ Machiavelli says, even, that this death began the split (vii. 102 A). But we have shown that it was anterior.

⁵ Cavalcanti, *Sec. Storia*, c. 30, ii. 206. G. Capponi (ii. 65, n. 2) gives Cavalcanti's text. Machiavelli, vii. 102 A.

⁶ Machiavelli, vii. 102 A.

view of future eventualities. Cosimo would not accept a rivalry that presupposed equality with himself. Assuming a serene and unapproachable elevation above all his fellow-citizens, instead of appearing in open contest with Neri, he pitted against him, publicly and in the councils, the person of Luca Pitti, an energetic but far from formidable opponent, full of devotion and as empty of brains.¹ Following his natural inclination, and opposing violent measures through love of reason and right, Neri served and strengthened Cosimo's power, unwittingly perhaps, and Cosimo must have regretted the loss of this useful counterbalance. The confusing activity of Luca Pitti was no longer necessary, and the two Cosimite factions were at liberty to tear each other to pieces.

One of the first actions of the Signory, on entering office after Neri's death (January 1458), was to decide on renewing the *catasto*, established in 1427. It confessed to the intention of redeeming the state debt, increased to a frightful proportion, but it concealed the principal one, that of robbing the powerful party of their advantages and privileges.² As a fact, the measure was both legitimate and urgent. Fresh fortunes had been made since 1427, especially since 1434, which escaped the tax. The general preference fell upon personal property, more easily hidden. These were erased from the books destined to be examined, unless entered for private inspection. Then, too, the opinion was advanced that the obligation to show the books was injurious to public credit, and interfered with the liberty of traders. The wealthy and powerful obtained exemption from this obligation, and bribed the authorities to shut their eyes to personal acquisitions. However arbitrary the creation of a new *catasto* might be, it was better than this deplorable state of affairs; it would satisfy the everlasting desire for equality in taxes of the poor and the middle class.³

¹ Guicciardini, *Opere ined.*, iii. 8.

² Nerli, *Comment.*, l. ii. p. 48.

³ See Machiavelli, vii. 102 B; Ammirato, xxiii. 85; Canestrini, *La Scienza di Stato*, p. 66.

But if the Medici, in quest of popularity, had favoured the popular tendency when they only had their single voice in the councils, now that fortune's wheel had turned and they were absolute masters, how could they uphold the old system? Would political calculation prevail against threatened interests? Nicodemo saw Florence "upside down, in a state of ferment; a stranger might have believed her on the verge of a revolution,"¹ for the secret had soon got wind.² All the wealthy were up in arms in pursuit of the orator of Milan, all except Cosimo, who comported himself with sovereign modesty—on the one side not wishing to displace the rich class, on the other desirous of preserving the confidence of the people, who were resolved upon the *catasto*.³

By remaining neutral, without giving the lie to his words of 1427, he ran no risk, since he could without any difficulty pay the new tax, while those of his partisans who interfered with him would be weakened. The provision passed on June 11, 1458,⁴ was executed by ten commissioners named for a year, who remained in office eighteen months, so onerous was the work of valuation and distribution of charges.⁵ This labour was aggravated by the orders they had received only to accord reductions by a unanimous vote,⁶ a guarantee against the pressure of the powerful assuredly, rather than against the complaints and demands of the poor.

It seems to us that Cosimo should have shown himself less

¹ "Interea se vedrà el fine de questo catasto che bolle coss forte . . . Va questa città tutta sotto sopra, in modo che chi non intendesse el modo loro, extimaria fossero per venire a novità" (Nicod. to Sforza, January 10, 1458, Orig., No. 1588, f. 10, and Buser, Append., p. 400).

² "Li stati popolari non se sano nè possono governare cum quella discretione et secreto che se converia, maxime questo nel disordine è stato da un pezo in qua" (*ibid.*).

³ "Contra la voglia de tuti li richi da Cosimo in fora che se ne porta cum summa modestia, perchè da uno canto non vole dispiacere a li homini richi, dall' altro non vole perdere la gracia del popolo minuto che vuole questo catasto omnino" (*ibid.*).

⁴ See text in Canestrini, p. 171. The preamble, like all others, is inspired by feelings of justice and equity.

⁵ Boninsegni, p. 119.

⁶ Canestrini, p. 171.

conciliatory upon giving up the convenient system of the authoritative *balie*,¹ and upon the restoration of lot-drawing, than upon the revival of the *catasto*; but he knew how to yield to circumstances and to bend before the wind. Matteo Bartoli, Gonfalonier of Justice in the succeeding Signory (March 1458), wishing to repeal these two measures, did not support him, but allowed the Priors to abandon him, and saw him retire abashed and ridiculous; he even permitted the Signory to pass a resolution quite opposed to him. The *balie* could only be solicited by the councils if the councils and their colleges had been unanimous, and to create it needed the vote of the three councils of the people, the commons and the Two Hundred.² Such was the popular wish, and it seemed wiser to yield to it. But let us see the end.

According to custom, a stringent decree had been issued against the *proposto* and the lords who infringed the new rules: a feeble barrier in truth, for resolute men. These would be forthcoming one day, and Cosimo would not interfere with them. Success, and not checkmate, was his desire.³ On the 1st July 1458, Luca Pitti was for the third time named Gonfalonier of Justice. He was at no pains to conceal his opposition to the *catasto* and the old freedom. He was regarded as a man of energy. In his youth he had obtained of Eugene IV., then residing at Florence, and of the Signory in power, a mission to Rome with a few fellow-countrymen, to help the commander of the castle of St. Angelo to capture and put to death the Patriarch-legate Vitelleschi; such was

¹ We may see in M. Cesare Paoli's work, *Del Magistrato della Balia nella Rep. di Siena, notizie e documenti*, Sienna, 1870, that the *balie* was there, as at Florence, an exception in grave circumstances, then an almost permanent abuse in the sixteenth century.

² Cambi, *Del.*, xx. 353; Morelli, *Del.*, xix. 177; Nerli, l. iii. p. 47; Machiavelli, vii. 102 B; Ammirato, xxiii. 85. Machiavelli is mistaken about the name of the Gonfalonier, consequently also upon the date.

³ It is difficult to misunderstand Cosimo to a greater extent than Sismondi. He shows him afflicted because his party gives in Luca Pitti a tyrant to the Republic (vi. 373). See Nerli, l. iii. p. 48, who cannot be accused of hostility to the Medici.

the beginning of his friendship with the Medici.¹ There was therefore no need to press him into action, as his friends and a few of his colleagues did.

The surprising thing is that he showed prudence. He proposed to proceed by the way of petition to demand that the exchanges should be burnt and reconstituted, and that the elections to office should again be made *a mano*, under pretext that the death of Calixtus III., the state of anarchy at Rome, and the brigandage of Count Averso d'Anguillara, caused the Republic to run great risks. But this was not the way to raise a revolution. Geronimo Machiavelli, doctor of law and an influential citizen, denied the danger from without, and displayed to parliament those of the *balie* and the assembly. As we have shown, the unanimous vote of the lords and the colleges was henceforth necessary. But the secret ballot, recently established, gave to the dissenters, timid or intimidated, the easy courage to pronounce according to their inclinations without peril.² Should this be renounced? Another would perhaps have done so. The impetuous Pitti took refuge in patience. Like the ant faced by an obstacle, he sought another path. The grand stroke he shrank from forcing by strength he accomplished by craft.

It was only in the midst of the Signory and its colleges that, according to the new law, the proposition of a *balie* should carry a unanimous vote. An assembly of parliament had not been foreseen. It might be convoked for any cause, and as there was always a chance of unseemly comedy, it would be easy, supposing a majority of two-thirds, to make it vote on any side. But first it was necessary to lock up Geronimo Machiavelli, reputed dangerous. His person was seized, and at the same time four poor souls (*pazzarelli* or *homini di poco*), two named Antonio Barbadori and Carlo Benizzi, who "might

¹ Jacopo Nardi, *Istoria della Città di Firenze*, l. i. vol. i. p. 22, Flor., 1842. An understanding between the legate and Milan against the Holy See had been discovered.

² Boninsegni, p. 121.

have had the state by the ears, were arrested in order to settle their affair for some time."¹ Under torture they were made to confess whatever was wished, notably that they had conspired through poverty and uncaptured.² This was high treason. "Not having been able to endure the frog," wrote Nicodemo, "they will endure the serpent," unless Cosimo pardons them, "for he always pardons, declaring that it suffices him to vanquish," a declaration that earned the praise and admiration of fools.³ On this occasion there was no great merit, since, upon the confession of the same poor devil, all the crime of the principal accused consisted in "having gone too far in words."⁴

It is doubtful if Machiavelli conspired, but it is certain that Luca Pitti did; conspirators in power are not rare. The day fixed upon was the 11th August. Upon the 8th, Nicodemo, Cosimo's confidant, communicated to his master, Sforza, the plan already settled. "To-morrow the Signor of Faenza will arrive with 300 horse and 50 *fanti*, as well as the troops of Simonetto. On Thursday the people outside will come.⁵ The infantry will be billeted in the houses of the Arts around the square; the horses of the Signor of Faenza in the plain of San

¹ "Pur questi detti pazarelli poriano tanto tirare le orecchie ad questi de lo stato, che gli svegliariano a volere sodare el facto loro per un pezzo" (Nicod. to Sforza, August 1, 1458, Orig., 1588, f. 109).

² "Chi più errava chiede perdonanza e confessa peccava perch' egli mancava faccenda et vedessi non haveano cappo et sono homini da poco" (Nicod. to Sforza, August 5, 1458, Orig., No. 1588, f. 114). "Questi giorni passati, questa citade ci è stata in grande ruyna, pensando il populo cum alcuni gentilhomini deffare questo stato et retogliarlo ne loro mane. . . . Havoli dato de la corda a prode tante che hano scoperto el facto" (Giovanni de Babilano, Podesta of Florence, to Sforza, August 13, 1458, *ibid.*, f. 119). The prisoners are named in a letter of Nicodemo dated August 8, *ibid.*, f. 116.

³ "Et passa cum summa laude et commendatione de Cosimo, quale . . . perdona ad ognuno et dice gli basta el vincere" (Nicod. to Sforza, August 5, 1458, Orig., No. 1588, f. 114). "Sono cose che ne anderia la vita et credessi che moiano, ma la bontà de Cosimo ha viso de camparli" (Nicod. to Sforza, August 8, *ibid.*, f. 116).

⁴ "Uno M. Geronimo Machiavelli quale era el da più fosse fra costoro et era andato molto innanti con le parole" (*ibid.*, Letter of August 5, f. 114).

⁵ Thus the country was Cosimite, and did not believe itself to have a right to the same liberty as the townspeople.

Salvi, outside the gate of *alla Croce*, and those of Simonetto between the *Lastra* and the gate of Pisa. On the morning of the day decided by parliament, they will come and range themselves for battle upon the place. All the people will be there unarmed. The lords will read a list of the numerous citizens to whom they will say they have given *balie* to improve the ground, and they will ask the people if they are content. Those who are well disposed will cry ‘*Sì, sì,*’ and every one will follow their example, as always happens.¹ The lords, *plaudentes et exsultantes*, will rise from the *ringhiera*; they will return to the palace, and this will terminate the festivities. Then little by little the number of the members of the *balie* will be reduced; a few will remain who will reform the state according to their fancy for some time, and then we can estimate this Signory and commons which for so many years have lived but upon agitation. Piero de Cosimo arrives to-day. He wishes to be present at this act, which does not take place often, and will be played without danger. He has left his wife and family well protected at Cafaggiolo.”² This may, indeed, be called a confession shorn of pretence. The unworthy parliamentary snare is shown to light, and Cosimo’s complicity placed beyond a doubt, in spite of his affected neutrality.³ These accusing proofs are not to be found in the archives of Florence, which by what has been said allow us to guess what has not been said.

From the 8th to the 11th secret meetings were multiplied. Nicodemo took part in them. Begged to give his advice, he consented; but he refused to mount on horseback, because no appeal to arms had been made to Milan. But at least they made him promise to shut himself up in the palace to guard it with Piero de Cosimo, Angelo Acciajuoli, and other important citizens. On the morning of the 11th the programme

¹ “Et cossi farà il populo, como è de usanza.”

² Nicod. to Sforza, August 8, 1458, Orig., No. 1588, f. 116.

³ “Benchè Cosimo se ne porti molto saviamente e in vista quasi neutrale” (Nicod. to Sforza, August 1, 1458, Orig., 1588, f. 109).

transcribed for Sforza by his ambassador was executed. The Signor of Faenza, with about 150 horse and more than 1000 infantry, took up his position on one side of the place. On the other, Simonetto, with the same number of horse and more than 5000 infantry, gathered in the country or in the mountains of Bologna. At the opening of the streets were more than 2000 citizens, armed to the teeth, and devoted to the state; as for the rest of the people, they were allowed into the middle of the square unarmed. Cosimo stayed in his palace well guarded, with Nicodemo and "such a quantity of arms and armour that they were worth a treasure, and were unmatched by any other collection in Italy."¹

Then why any surprise that everything was accomplished that morning "in the greatest possible unison, without the least scandal?"² Giovanni de Balbiano, at that time podesta at Florence, must have known very little of its history, and not have felt its disgrace, to admire a unanimity so well prepared. "It seemed to me the most surprising thing in the world," he writes. "If I had not been present, I never could have believed that so great a multitude could have been gathered, after recent rumours, without a scene."³ In one voice, and like a clap of thunder, the crowd shouted, "*Sì, sì, fiat, fiat!*"⁴ to the proposal to grant full *balie* to the lords and 250 other citizens to reform the state, to preside at the election of public officers at judgments non-judicial, at the taxation and distribution of taxes, and at the reconstitution of the exchanges for five years, and that until the end of the following January, which meant a duration of about six months.⁵ The podesta was confirmed in full power for a year, without

¹ Nicod. to Sforza, August 11, 1458, Orig., No. 1588, f. 117. The podesta of Florence, writing to Sforza, estimates the number of soldiers assembled at 12,000 cavalry or infantry (August 13, *ibid.*, f. 119).

² Nicod. to Sforza, *ibid.*, f. 117. Cf. Boninsegni, p. 121.

³ Giov. de Balbiano to Sforza, *ibid.*, f. 119.

⁴ Giov. de Balbiano to Sforza, Orig., *ibid.*, f. 119.

⁵ Fil. Rinuccini, p. 88; Boninsegni, p. 121; Cambi, *Del.*, xx. 358; Machiavelli, vii. 102 B; Ammirato, xxiii.

having to render any account, without being submitted to the syndicate on leaving office.¹ The famous *balie* of 1434 was renewed. They had got on very well with shameful jobbery, and they expected to get on no worse. "The proposals of the Signory," again writes Nicodemo, "seemed very honourable, so that the people readily accepted them, and every one praised them."² The trick was played.

For the comedy to look serious, there remained to make the scapegoats at hand pay the piper. Geronimo Machiavelli, Pietro, his brother, and Carlo Benizzi were confined in Avignon for twenty-five years, and the first paid 400, the second 3000 ducats. The three brothers Benizzi and their son, Antonio Barbadori and his sons, were banished outside the boundaries for the same time, nine others for a year, and all of course deprived of office for ever.³ The Marquis de Lunigiana having given up Machiavelli, he was again put to the torture and flung into prison. There he died in 1460 from his past sufferings, perhaps indeed from others imposed afterwards, if he was not killed as a definite liquidation of his debts.⁴

These were only a few of the victims: the Signory of November, to rid itself of the suspects, swept away, in the general condemnations pronounced in 1434, all the sons and nephews of the citizens who had incurred them. Thus eleven families were struck out: Bardi, Belfredelli, Brancacci, Peruzzi, Castellani, Strozzi, Ardinghelli, Baldovinetti, Guasconi, Guadagni, Rondinelli.⁵ "Let the reader learn," writes Giovanni Cambi

¹ "Cum baylia et cum possanza de poter fare come meglio a my pari et piace, senza rendere alcuna, raxone nè stare a sindacato" (G. de Balbiano, *ibid.*).

² Nicodemo to Sforza, August 11, *ibid.*, f. 117.

³ *Archivio Sforzesco*, Orig., No. 1588, f. 129. List of the confined, August 17, 1458. The names are there. Cf. Boninsegni (p. 121) and Fil. Rinuccini (p. 88), who are inexact.

⁴ Contemporaries hesitate. Boninsegni (p. 127) says he died "per disagi o per tormenti." Machiavelli (vii. 103 A) believes unhesitatingly that his ancestor "fu morto in carcere," that is, assassinated. Ammirato (xxiii. 90), "Si morì per i disagi patiti prigione." Gir. Machiavelli died, says Inghirami (viii. 351), seeing the value of a republican heart in a country of slaves. Cf. Cambi, *Del.*, xx. 361.

⁵ Fil. Rinuccini, p. 88; Cambi, *Del.*, xx. 362.

upon it, "never to give the *balie*, never to let parliament act. Better to die sword in hand than allow a tyrant to be established, for in a little while he degrades those who have made him great; he surrounds himself with new men unknown to the city, having every reason to sustain him lest his fall should involve their own."¹ Thus speak the first historians of "the father of his country." We are carried as far away from the clemency of Augustus as from the universal consent to his domination. What the cold Guicciardini, who belongs to posterity, says of the early days of Cosimo may be said of his latter days: "His rule was like all newly established rules—severity and bad precedent in abundance."²

This authoritative *balie*, which was substituted for, or rather superposed upon, all other official powers, which was to last five years and be renewed every five years, strengthened for ever the secret power of Cosimo, and made him absolutely master under the guise of a simple citizen.³ It was the key of his system. Machiavelli has clearly said that the men who governed from 1434 to 1494 professed "that it was necessary every five years to regain possession of the state by inspiring the same terror with which they had seized it before," and he justifies this policy by the fact that every ten years people change fashions, ideas, and transgress the laws.⁴ The intention was to make up in material comforts to the Florentines who yielded what they lost in liberty—a sure means of securing the vulgar. Cosimo and Luca Pitti obtained the commission to canalise the Arno.⁵ Stone houses were constructed to accommodate the ever-increasing population (1463).⁶ In eighteen months (1458–59) ten galleys full of merchandise had been sent to England, Barbary, and Constantinople.

¹ Cambi, *Del.*, xx. 363.

² Guicciardini, *Del Reggim. di Fir.*, *Op. ined.*, ii. 68.

³ *Ibid.*, *Storia di Fir.*, *Op. ined.*, iii. 13.

⁴ *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di T. Livio*, iii. 1, p. 254 A.

⁵ Ammirato, xxiii. 88.

⁶ Fil. Rinuccini, *Ricordi*, p. 90.

This merchandise was sold and replaced by a heavy freight for return. By a miracle, there were no accidents by sea, and Florence was in high glee over such a manifest and unusual protection of Providence.¹

Another feature of this degrading policy: there was a pretence made to return in honours the power of which the principal officers were shorn. Already, in November 1453, Luca Pitti being Gonfalonier of Justice, it was decided that when the Priors went out they should be escorted by twelve mace-bearers carrying silver maces. In January 1454, silver and carpets were bought to beautify their tables and residences; in the palace courtyard the offices were displaced from under the arcades, and the market that was held upon the square was removed elsewhere, so that whoever approached the Signory should be filled with respect.² In January 1459, after the events we have recorded, and upon the proposal of the same Luca Pitti, for the official and ancient title of *Priors of Art*—that of the lords was in reality only a courtesy title—was substituted the name of *Priors of Liberty*, so that the constant use of the word should satisfy the credulous for the loss of the thing.³ To the Gonfalonier of Justice, who had henceforth authority over the podesta, more and more reduced in power, over the captain of the people, now only the chief of the soldiers of the palace, over the executor, reduced to the condition of *bargello* or hangman, was granted the privilege not only of sitting upon the right of the Priors,⁴ but in the midst of them, and to walk at their head—a serious change which was celebrated by processions.⁴ Until then, the gonfalon of justice was remitted to the Gonfalonier entering office by the podesta; henceforth he was to receive it from the Gonfalonier leaving office, so that there should be no interruption in the transmis-

¹ Boninsegni, p. 125. Ammirato (xxiii. 87) only mentions five galleys.

² Ammirato, xxii. 78.

³ Cambi, *Del.*, xx. 367; Nerli, l. iii. p. 49; Ammirato, xxiii. 88.

⁴ Nerli, l. iii. p. 49; Machiavelli, vii. 103 A.

sion of the principal magistrateship.¹ On the 31st January 1463, for appearance's sake, to throw dust in the eyes of the people, four doctors were elected to sit in the podesta's palace upon civil questions, with a salary of 300 florins; then two others to sit in the captain's palace for appeals, and a notary with forty *fanti* for the execution of the sentences pronounced by the Eight of the *balie*.²

Vain pretences! illusive guarantees! Cosimo was the sole head, represented in his absence and in his son's (for both had aged prematurely, were chained to the house with gout, and usually lived in the country) by the faithful Luca Pitti, who was followed everywhere and treated with honour as the first citizen of the Republic.³ In matters of cunning and ferocity he at first had shown himself violent; but by effort he cultivated courtesy, was amiable to everybody whose interest it was to pretend to find him such while favours were in his hands. He did not give them away: we are assured that he received at one time from the Signory and from numerous Florentines presents amounting to 20,000 ducats (December 23, 1463).⁴

His appetite, once excited, grew insatiable. He wanted to

¹ Cambi, *Del.*, xx. 361; Ammirato, xxiii. 83.

² Alam. Rinuccini, *Ric.*, p. 90. Ammirato (xxiii. 87) says that the Eight were a recent creation; he believes that later they were called "the Eight of practice." According to Reumont (*Cenni sui Magistrati della Rep.*), the Eight of balie and of guard had the charge of criminal and police affairs. Their office lasted four months, but it should be confirmed at the beginning of the third by the incoming Signory. They sat in the podesta's palace. The same Reumont, at the words "Eight of practice," returns to "Ten of Liberty, also called Ten of balie or of war, or of war and peace, and instituted in 1423." There were the Eight of war before them in 1376. In 1512 the Ten of Liberty were suppressed, and replaced by the Eight of practice. It was a case for crying with General La Marmora: "Un pò più di luce!" But we recognise our impotence, and it is a little Florence's fault with her plethora of offices succeeding, or rather superseding each other, without either use or reason.

³ Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir.*, *Op. ined.*, iii. 13. Nicodemo, speaking of an important decision to raise ("far novo squitino ad tutti li offitii"), but difficult because it needed "tre consigli de popolo et tre di comune," adds: "Li più credono se habia ad ottenere per rispetto a l'autorità de Luca Pitti." (July 24, 1458, *Orig.*, 1588, f. 96.)

⁴ Morelli, *Del.*, xix. 179.

compete with and even eclipse the Medici. As there were balls in their arms, he added a bomb to his. Not so rich as they, he lived more ostentatiously. He built "two superb and royal palaces," says Machiavelli,¹ one at Rusignano, whose walls extended a mile, the other equally large, at the foot of the hills of Oltrarno, the famous Pitti palace, that has kept his name even after the Medici, raised to the title of Grand Dukes, and, in need of wider space, established themselves therein. For the construction of these costly edifices, arbitrary power and unquestioned privileges came not amiss; he made the commons and private individuals furnish him with money and materials. All burglars, murderers, and exiles had only to work for him to find a shelter more sure than a sanctuary in the shadow of the stones that were heaped in the cyclopean fashion of the Etruscans.² The Medici must have envied him this invention. As for the Florentines, they regarded this subaltern tyranny as intolerable, and yet it lasted eight years!³

Festivities were their consolation, as in olden times they had been their delight. They sought every excuse for them, and certainly they missed none. *Panem et circenses*, a degraded people want nothing else. Æneas Sylvius, a learned man in the imperial service, as celebrated as Pope as he had been as a man of science, had succeeded (August 16, 1458) old Calixtus III., the enemy of Alphonsus of Naples, whose minister he had been.⁴ Given up to the idea of a crusade against the Turks, Pius II. had, from his elevation, vexed the Florentines by his relations with the Aragonese, and by investing with royal rights the successor of their irreconcilable enemy, Don Ferrante, Ferrando or Ferdinand, the false and

¹ Machiavelli, vii. 103 A.

² *Ibid.*; Ammirato, xxiii. 87.

³ Machiavelli, vii. 103 A.

⁴ Cosimo did not believe in this enmity. The King and the Pope, he said, were "unum et idem, posto che facciano tale vista del contrario. . . . Il Re non extima el Papa, como quello che cognosce da poco et sa non gli pò scampare da le mani" (Nicod. to Sforza, April 4, 1458, Orig., 1588, f. 50).

cruel bastard of Alphonsus the Magnanimous.¹ All Italy, as well as Florence, preferred the good-natured race of Anjou; but no state was so bound to them as this Republic by the overtures and protestations made to Charles VII. and his family. Everything justified Florence's dissatisfaction with the Pope. Notwithstanding which, when they learnt that this same old sovereign, whom Cosimo abused for undertaking the work of a young man,² was to pass through their town on his way to Mantua, where he had summoned an immense meeting of Christian princes, they prepared to do him every honour, in other words to amuse themselves. Their festivities were so well known to be matchless,³ that Sforza, sending his son Galeaz Maria, aged seventeen, with his compliments to the pontiff, allowed him to go to Florence, rather than to the nearer town of Mantua.

Galeaz Maria arrived on April 17, 1459, and was lodged in Cosimo's palace. From the 19th he sent his father a valuable account of his stay, which give us a better glimpse of the private lives of this family of upstarts than does ordinary history. Whenever he went to hear mass at the Nunziata, or to pay a visit to the Priors of Liberty, a crowd of citizens gathered round him and followed him, delighted to see him shaking hands with each of the nine members of the Signory. Whenever he returned to the Medici palace, his hosts came to meet him. As a rare mark of intimacy, they allowed the women to remain in the room where they received him.⁴ At least once a day one of Piero's daughters played

¹ October 1458. See Sismondi, vi. 324.

² Machiavelli, vii. 104 B; Ammirato, xxiii. 92. "Hano in horrido et odio la natura del Re di Ragona (Alphonsus), al quale dicono aver usate molte cortesie et portato per suo amore mille corne, et tamen non l'hano may possuto placare nè adomesticare" (Nicod. to Sforza, April 9, 1458, f. 54).

³ "Qui è uno vetustissimo dicto, cioè che li signori fiorentini non sano spendere poco nè l'assay, se non a lume de lucerna, cioè in furia" (Nicod. to Sforza, December 15, 1457; *Arch. di Milano*, in Buser, *Append.*, p. 399).

⁴ After mentioning all that he finds agreeable in this reception, Galeaz Maria adds, "Ma molto maggiore l'usare la domesticheza con mi che egli fa in fare stare le done sue dove io sto" (Galeaz Maria to Sforza, April 19, 1459, *Orig.*, 1588, f. 225).

upon a metal instrument for him.¹ Does this not resemble a matrimonial overture? This is not all. The young Signor is enticed to Careggi, where he admires everything—the gardens, the palace, the furniture, and the cooking. He dined with all the family, except Cosimo's son Giovanni, who did not sit at table, and did not even eat, that he might see the others attended to. Galeaz notes eight dishes raised and gilt, without counting the sweetmeats. "It was splendid," he writes. Afterwards they went into another room. There a master sang to the lyre. A poet recited verses in honour of the foreigner, who naturally found that "no poet or orator had ever before spoken so well. Some of his comparisons surpassed Lucan and Dante. It was a mixture of history and fable, plentifully sprinkled with the names of the poets, the Romans, and all the Muses." After music and poetry came dancing. Piero, his "tall daughter," or his eldest, Giovanni's wife, and others, among them a Strozzi, one of the most beautiful women of Florence, and several country-folk danced. They danced Florentine dances, "with leaps and capers." A supper finished the proceedings. After this intimate entertainment, on his return to his room, Galeaz found two messengers who came to offer him a parrot, a monkey, and a cat.²

Two days later (April 25) Pius II. made his solemn entrance, followed by ten cardinals, sixty bishops, and a number of prelates.³ He was received with a flourish of oratory, young Sforza⁴ making his speech on his knees; and having offered his foot to be kissed, he was placed upon a seat covered with brocade, and held upon their shoulders by Galeaz, and the Signors of Rimini, Carpi, and Forli. In olden times it was con-

¹ "Fea sonare una figliola di Piero suo figliolo uno organo do cave, che era una zentil cosa da oldire . . . laqual cosa però l'ha facto ogni dì dopo ch'io sono qui" (Galeaz Maria to Sforza, April 19, 1459, Orig., 1588, f. 215).

² Galeaz Maria to Sforza, April 23, 1459, Orig., 1588, f. 226.

³ Boninsegni, p. 123.

⁴ Sforza's ambassadors are wearisome about his son's eloquence, modesty, and prudence in this ceremony. See their two letters of April 27, and that of Galeaz to his mother of same date. Orig., 1588, f. 227-229.

sidered enough to mount a Pope, upon his entrance into a town, upon a magnificently caparisoned mule. *Crescit eundo*. "It was pride, and not piety," writes the historian Cambi.¹

At night the jousts were celebrated upon the square of Santa Croce, by the light of more than 300 torches. On April 30, at the Mercato Nuovo, there was a ball, where the young people of both sexes, dancing officially in the name of the commons, changed their dresses several times, each costume more magnificent than the last. Refreshments were offered in vases and baskets of silver. The spectators were numbered at 60,000.² Certainly the twentieth part could not find accommodation in such a narrow if splendid square. By "spectators," doubtless the immense crowd gathered in the neighbourhood to see the guests is meant.³ On the 2nd May⁴ a chase took place in the square of the Signory. All the issues were closed, the public protected, and a collection of animals let loose—horses, bulls, cows, calves, buffaloes, boars, wolves, one giraffe, at that period a novelty, and a few lions—that the Republic kept from time immemorial. But the noble brutes, ruined by a long captivity, bewildered and frightened by the tumult and shouts, only showed a feeble front to each other. The spectacle fell flat, and was ridiculous.⁵ Vexed by this failure, the Signors tried to atone for it by courtesies and a banquet, to which Galeaz Maria and several cardinals were invited, and which cost a mint of money.⁶

¹ "Cheffù chosa di superbia e non di santità" (Cambi, *Del.*, xx. 369).

² Cambi, *ibid.*

³ A long description of these feasts in verse may be seen in Muratori (R. I. S., Supp., ii. 723-752).

⁴ Date given by Galeaz the next day, who could not have been mistaken (Orig., 1588, f. 233). The descriptive poem referred to says May 1 (p. 741).

⁵ It was remembered long afterwards. Proposing a fresh trial of the lions, March 15, 1462, the people cried, "Un porco ghagliardo et poy una cerva grande." Nicodemo, reporting the fact, adds, "Et fecero bona prova et bel vedere molto più che a la caccia grande del nostro Ill. Conte Galeaz" (March 16, 1462, Orig., 1589, f. 51).

⁶ Galeaz to Sforza, May 3, 1459, Orig., 1588, f. 233; Cambi, *Del.*, xx. 369-370; Morelli, *Del.*, xix. 178; Boninsegni, p. 124; Fil. Rinuccini, p. 89; Poem

On the evening of the same day came the real compensation. In the trembling and fantastic flame of torches, Florence celebrated the triumph of Love. Twenty young "gentlemen," the first of the town, and a regiment of men on foot, armed with wands decorated with various devices, walked before a car drawn by two white horses. The horses were richly harnessed in brocade and velvet. Behind came the standard and the trumpets. The car was of fine gold, and raised from the four corners into a sort of *campanile*, surmounted by an apple, the whole of pure gold. Young boys carrying lanterns at the end of their wands formed a fiery garland which threatened to burn the car. Conspicuous in the middle stood a youth dressed in flesh-coloured tights, with many-hued wings, his eyes bandaged, bow and arrow in hand—the god of Love! Twelve youths broke a lance against a richly decorated wooden horse, and this was the end of the spectacle. We must add the epilogue of gifts. Galeaz Maria, who, more than Pope Pius II., was the hero of these scenes, since more than ever was the Republic in need of his father, received from the Signory two silver basins and vases so heavy, that a single man could hardly lift one; twenty-four cups exquisitely wrought, and very heavy too; the whole valued at 1800 ducats. This he called a small present.¹ He had acquired the lust of gold in a good school.²

These festivities were, if not interrupted, troubled and saddened by the illness that carried off St. Antoninus, the venerated Archbishop of Florence, on the 10th May.³ This little man, called Antonino because of his low stature, had

in R. I. S., Supp., ii. The poem is headed by a vignette showing the empty space and the lions diverting themselves. Only few spectators are seen.

¹ Galeaz Maria to Sforza, May 3, 1459, Orig., 1588, f. 233. One cardinal, taking Galeaz for a child, sent him a toy ship beautifully worked in crystal and silver (*ibid.*).

² The festivities were hardly ended when Galeaz left Florence, preceding the Pope by two days (Boninsegni, p. 124; Fil. Rinuccini, p. 86), which proves that he came for his own pleasure, and not through respect.

³ Ughelli, *Italia Sacra*, to the Archbishops of Florence, iii. 173.

worn the mitre in his native town from the year 1446. The Pope had to use his authority to force him out of the Dominican convent of Fiesole, and the Florentines welcomed him with delight, although it seemed strange to these pretended democrats to see the son of the humble notary Pierozzo raised to a rank so high.¹ If he courted the Medici like everybody else, it was simply that he could not but be like Panurge's sheep. Generous, charitable, indulgent for others, for himself he was rigid, and preached virtue by example as well as by words, living in his episcopal palace in a small cell furnished with a monk's bed and a wooden seat, and leaving behind him, for all possessions, hardly the value of £120 and the mule he was in the habit of riding.²

But he also left as a lasting remembrance a charitable establishment that deserves mention, because it still exists—the *buonumini* of San Martino. Their duty was to succour the wretched victims of confiscation and despoilment. Knowing the encroaching proclivities of these societies, the prudent prelate imposed upon his own the obligation to buy no land, to amass no capital, and to spend everything in alms, no matter how great were the gifts or legacies it might receive.³ He had the rare fortune of proving a prophet in his own country. His death was an apotheosis. The citizens followed his funeral as far as San Marco, his own convent, where he was buried. They acquired the habit of invoking him, of consecrating to him images and *ex voto* offerings, thereby forcing his canonisation upon the Holy See.⁴

Pius II. had gone to Mantua; he returned thence humbled enough, without having excited the Christian princes against

¹ Boninsegni, p. 125.

² Vespasiano, *Vita dell' Arcivesc. Antonino Fior.*, c. 14, *Spicil. Rom.*, i. 242; *Pii II. Comment.*, l. ii. p. 50; Boninsegni, p. 124; Ammirato, xxii. 49.

³ Boninsegni, p. 125; G. Capponi, ii. 72; Martelli, a work upon the *buonumini di S. Martino* and their history to our times in the *Rassegna Nazionale*, Ann. vi., February 1, 1884.

⁴ Boninsegni, p. 124; Adrian IV. in 1524 canonised St. Antoninus. See Ughelli, iii. 173.

the Turk; those of Italy above all being quite given up to their selfish quarrels. The question of the hour was the struggle between Ferrante of Naples and René's son, John of Anjou and Duke of Calabria. Simultaneously the two rivals solicited the aid of Florence and Venice—Ferrante, according to the engagements of the league of 1455; John, in virtue of the bond between the house of France and the two Republics. The one title had the double merit of being recent and written, while the other was lost in the night of ages; but the balance was established by the fact that John possessed the general sympathy; his modesty, his honesty, his goodness and humanity won him the praise of all.¹ The balance even dipped on John's side, and, as we are always ready to justify our actions by sound reasons, it was said that both Republics were pledged to Naples, and not to the princes of Aragon, seeing that kings are supposed to treat in the name of their subjects, and that the alliance could not compel the allies to force a hated king upon the kingdom. It was added that Don Ferrante had lost the right to appeal to the treaty of the league by permitting Piccinino, and even ordering him perhaps, to make war upon the Tuscans.

But Florence did not at once decide.² Between Charles VII., who occupied Genoa, and Don Ferrante, who disputed it with him, her citizens were divided. Acciajuoli and Dietisalvi believed Don Ferrante would succeed³ because of "the natural negligence of the French,"⁴ and along with many others desired it. Cosimo was of another opinion, and his old hatred

¹ Letter of the Signory to Charles VII., June 30, 1455, to King Rene, undated; text in Desjardins, i. 80. Replies to an ambassador of Charles VII., October 7, 1458, and one of René, October 21, 1458; text in Desjardins, i. 87, 91.

² The negotiations lasted all the year 1458. See documents in Desjardins, i. 82-96. They lose a little of their value when we remember that these discussions were only, as low comedy style calls it, "La bagatelle de la porte."

³ Nicod. to Sforza, April 9, 1458, Orig., 1588, f. 54; August 17, 1463, Orig., 1589, f. 190. Nicodemo formally states that Dietisalvi is Aragonese because Cosimo is French.

⁴ "Per la loro innata negligentia" (Nicod. and the Bishop of Modena to Sforza, May 6, 1458, *ibid.*, f. 57).

of the Aragonese, strengthened incessantly by daily squabbles,¹ was of course shared by the greater number of his countrymen. More zealous on John of Calabria's side than Venice, he promised him an annual subsidy of 80,000 florins. Everything depended upon Sforza, his right hand, in the keeping of his promise, and Sforza at that moment leaned towards the King of Naples. Weak as this prince was, and weaker still by reason of the Pope's enmity, since he could no longer have designs upon Milan, he ceased to be a dangerous neighbour for Genoa.² It was Sforza who advised Don Ferrante to recall the treaty of the league in claiming the help of the Florentines when he asked to be rid of the Pope.³ Cosimo reminded him of his obligations to the house of Anjou, his wrongs from the house of Aragon, showed him the latter as a lost cause, and begged him not to resuscitate the dead. He offered himself as intermediary between him and the Duke of Calabria, with the promise to obtain fair conditions.⁴

¹ "L'universale de li cittadini nel comuni voriano piutosto Francia per rispetto a l'amicitia antiqua" (Nicod., Letter of April 9, 1456, f. 54). "Non se mostrano contenti che l'habii piutosto luy che Francesi" (May 6, 1458, f. 57). See text above, p. 148, note 2. The King of Naples held in dependence all the ports of the Florentine coast. A Genoese galley, pursued by the Neapolitans, sought refuge at Leghorn; they wanted to seize it. Not being able, they charged 100 ducats for their disappointment, and seized three barques manned by seventeen sailors. The captain of Leghorn retorted by seizing twelve men of the Neapolitan galleys who had come ashore. The Florentines said, "Io mi darey prima al inimico de Dio non che al gran Turcho che patergli tanta puzza" (Nicod., April 9, 1458, f. 54).

² "De Re Ferrando se haveria molto meglior servitio che del patre, presertim perchè la reputation è minore, et ex consequente luy ha major bixogno de amici" (Nicod. to Sforza, July 15, 1458, Orig., 1588, f. 94). The proofs of pontifical enmity may be seen in the two despatches of Don Ferrante and Nicodemo to Sforza of 20th and 24th July 1458, Orig., 1588, f. 95-96.

³ He asks, "De duobus alterum: o mandino al Papa, a removerlo de questa opinione, o per via d'arme gli propulsino questa ingiuria da dosso" (Nicod. to Sforza, July 29, 1458, Orig., 1588, f. 103). Pius only continued the policy of Calixtus III., who had excommunicated the King of Aragon and of Naples. See the discourse of the ambassador of France, Milon de Liers, doctor and Dean of Chartres, in Desjardins, i. 88.

⁴ See this letter of Cosimo in R. I. S., xxi., as a note to Simoneta's text, p. 701-703. Nothing in Simoneta indicates precisely the date of this letter and the reply; but above the columns in which they are reported are "An. 1459."

Sforza preferred something craftier than these commonplace tactics of a veteran politician. At first alleging his engagements, which he could have broken had interest prompted him to do so, he replied that Don Ferrante was far from dead; that he even had over his rival the advantage of possessing capital and fortresses; that only possessing his kingdom,¹ he became Italian, in which he differed from his father, who also reigned in Spain, and from the princes of Anjou, who were only supported in Naples by the insolent and ambitious French, who despised the manners and laws of other races, and who already had a footing in Italy by their garrisons of Asti and Genoa, their alliances in Romagna, and by their conquests in Calabria. Established in the North, was it the intention to establish them in the South? ²

As reason is always in the right, Sforza gained over Pius II. in spite of the Pope's inveterate dislike of his Neapolitan neighbours and their king. In turn, Pius II., passing through Florence, where he felt himself too unpopular³ to remain longer than forty-eight hours⁴ (January 27, 1460), questioned Cosimo, and forced him to withdraw the vote of supplies to John of Calabria. By a common agreement, Florence and Venice consented to a strict neutrality, while promising both rivals friendship and service.⁵

In reality this right-about-facing cost Cosimo nothing; he was used to double dealings. Two years earlier he sent an embassy to the King of Naples that provoked a protest from

¹ This was just the reason that decided the French upon a fresh expedition: "Nullum aliud regnum nisi Sicilie retinentem, tempus Renato Regi visum est illius regni recuperandi" (October 20, 1458, Embassy of the Bishop of Marseilles in René's name; text in Desjardins, i. 90).

² See the text of this reply in Simoneta, R. I. S., xxi. 703-706. Cf. Ammirato, xxiii. 89.

³ "L'universale de la città non amano el Papa" (Nicod. to Sforza, June 28, 1464, Orig., 1590, f. 256).

⁴ Boninsegni, p. 126.

⁵ *Pius II. Comment.*, l. iv. p. 96; Ammirato, xxiii. 89.

the Bishop of Marseilles, René's ambassador.¹ It is worth seeing the reply the Gonfalonier of Justice, Otto Niccolini, was ordered to make the prelate: the Republic had concluded the treaties which prevented it from interfering in behalf of René with the prince's own assent, and he could not want his allies to incur dishonour and infamy without profit even to his own cause,² since Florence was the least powerful of the confederates. How could she sustain a war with her poor territory solely supported by her trade, a trade too considerable in Apulia and Sicily to be exposed to loss by the loss of security upon the seas?³ The Bishop was not silenced: no treaty with a bastard against whom the Pope and the cardinals had declared could be regarded as binding; but knowing with whom he had to deal, he demanded a written reply,⁴ and persisted in his demand, although the Gonfalonier declared his suspicion of Florentine good faith an insult.⁵ Hurtful or not, it was justified. Cosimo's advice to the King of France and King René was still fresh in the memory. Had he not even traced a plan for them? After exhausting flattering terms upon the Duke of Calabria, and the reverse upon the "King of Aragon," he counselled the lords of the *fleur-de-lis* to join Milan, Lucca, and Florence, to await the death of King Alphonsus and of Pope Pius, both old men, to secure a favourable election at Rome, and then together start an expedition against the kingdom.⁶

¹ "Et quum intellexit orator ipse destinasse Dominos oratores quosdam ad hunc regnum Sicilie detinentem . . . dixit rem hanc Francorum regi et suo non mediocrem admirationem allaturam; ideoque rogare Dominos ut oratoribus ipsis destinatis scribant, ne ultra progrediantur" (October 20, 1458; text in Desjardins, i. 90).

² "Dedecus illis et infamiam pararent, absque, aliqua ipsorum commoditate" (*ibid.*, p. 92).

³ "Nam ex Italie potentiis que in federe sunt, hanc minorem esse" (Otto Niccolini, Gonf. of Justice, &c., *ibid.*, p. 92, 93).

⁴ The Bishop of Marseilles, *ibid.*, p. 94, 95.

⁵ Otto Niccolini, *ibid.*, p. 95, 96. The Gonfalonier twists all the Bishop's arguments against himself: Don Ferrante was always regarded as Alphonsus's son; Calixtus's decision was null; the ambassadors could not be recalled. The negotiations continued until 1460. See Desjardins, i. 96-100.

⁶ Nicodemo to Sforza, May 24, 1458, Orig., 1588, f. 74.

It is possible that in France this specious policy was well liked, but the weathercock had again changed.

Rascality is not ability, and a man may be caught in his own net. Cosimo's great ability, which history insists upon, is not visible in his actions at this time; the only proof of it lies in his established rule, and in this he was helped by circumstances. Towards the end of his career all his calculations were false. In July 1461 René's fleet was beaten by the Genoese; ¹ John of Calabria was defeated at Troia, August 18, 1462.² Forsaken by his allies, he left the kingdom in the spring of 1464, and Genoa at once submitted to the Duke of Milan.³

This was Cosimo's sole chance, to cling to his alliance in order to obtain some advantage from it.⁴ The Duke of Milan was stronger than ever, the more so because Louis XI. avowed his intention to marry John of Calabria to Hippolita, Sforza's daughter, and to unite with the latter as well as with Florence to combat the Duke of Orleans' pretensions upon Lombardy, and to support the young married pair in the conquest of Naples.⁵ Well, this is just the moment he selected to worry, or allow his old ally to be worried by impolitic quibbles dictated by stinginess. It is an instructive detail.

To Sforza's reiterated and truly exasperating demands, Cosimo at last sent him 50,000 ducats.⁶ But if he had read Seneca he would have learned that he who gives at once

¹ See details in Sismondi, vi. 357-361.

² The 4th of May preceding, when, twice victor, he still kept a footing in the kingdom, Louis XI. thanked the Florentines for "labores non modicos et diligentias per vos jam factus apud ducem Mediolani super pacificatione regis Siciliae" (text in Desjardins, i. 134).

³ See Sismondi, vi. 357-361.

⁴ "La partenza di M. Alberico in su la quale fa fundamento (Cosimo) assay per la salveza de' vostri incliti successori, *ex consequenti de soy figlioli*" (Nicod. to Sforza, September 1, 1463, Orig., No. 1589, f. 201). Machiavelli (vii. 104 B) says that Cosimo was displeased that Sforza had not helped him to reconquer Lucca.

⁵ Report of the ambassadors of France, March 13 and 14, 1642, in Desjardins, i. 127-133. In this collection are various documents (p. 104-124) proving the friendly relations between Louis XI. and Florence.

⁶ Nicod. to Sforza, June 6, 1463, 1589, f. 150.

gives twice, and he ignored the legal adage that we cannot give and retain. The funds voted, he refused to allow them to be claimed from the Signory until he had arranged matters,¹ he alone being responsible for the Duke, a chord he continually played.² A month passed, when he, the master, made no objection to the exaction that the sum should be repaid in two years. Even more, he made no statement regarding the nature of the payment; the text did not say whether the florins should be *larghi* or *di camera*, which left it open to pay *di sugello* florins, worth less, by which Sforza would lose seven thousand ducats. Cosimo admitted that a loan or a subsidy should be paid in florins *di camera*, but there was no remedy, he added, as it would be necessary to have recourse to the councils.³ "These fifty thousand ducats," Nicodemo wrote, "are turning me into a goat. May the Lord send me death rather than condemn me to go incessantly from the lords to the *monte* and from the *monte* to the lords."⁴ It was hardly worth while to accuse the Venetians of sowing discord,⁵ as Cosimo did, when a quarrel with Sforza was risked like this for the sake of a few ducats. It is true "the lying Venetians" cherished an extraordinary hatred for the Florentines,⁶ but this was only a loan

¹ "Non vole Cosimo che per hogi faci la richiesta vostra de li 50 m. ducati ad questa Signoria che è intrata questa matina, ma vole prima haver disposta la cosa" (Nicod. to Sforza, September 1, 1643, Orig., 1589, f. 201).

² "Havimo voluto chiarire che qui non havete altro che luy (March 26, 1464, Orig., 1590, f. 91). Cosimo et Piero vogliono quel che noy, ma dubitano de doe cose principalmente: una di non poter indure el popolo al bixogno vostro, dubitando de guerra et de la disfacione de loro mercadanti et trafichi oltremonti. L'altra che sopra de la borse de questo popolo, nol dicono a la scoperta, ma cum enigmati che gli intendo benissimo" (April 4, 1642, Orig., 1589, f. 55).

³ "Pur conclude non vi esser rimedio, perho ne da corozarsene" (Nicod. to Sforza, September 27, 1463, Orig., 1589, f. 221, and Buser, Append., p. 415). Se si potesse havere per qualche via extraordinaria senza havere a capitare a consigli" (October 16, 1463, f. 254).

⁴ October 1, 1463, Orig., 1589, f. 227, and Buser, Append., p. 416.

⁵ "Sentisti tu may, Nicodemo, li maiori bosardi et sfazati homini che sono Venetiani. . . . Non si vergognano ad volere irritare el signore contra de noy" (Nicod. to Sforza, October 9, 1463, Orig., 1589, f. 243).

⁶ "Costoro ano tanto odio contra Fiorentini che he una cossa incredibile" (Ghirardo de Colli to Sforza, Venice, March 24, 1464, Orig., 1590, f. 83).

for a return.¹ For a long while Florence had aroused a general enmity.²

While continuing to twist and turn according to his genius, Cosimo was less cautious than in the past; he felt himself well in the saddle. Alessandra Macinghi, mother of the exiled Strozzi, wrote these significant words: "It is well for those who side with the Medici; it is ill for those who side with the Pazzi."³ A little earlier she lowered herself by saying, doubtless in secret irony, that "every one should kiss the ground his feet had touched."⁴ However, at this time Cosimo was upon the decline. Old, worried by gout, which left him susceptible to the slightest damp, the slightest change of temperature,⁵ reduced to go to bed after his audiences, or even to receive in bed,⁶ he was frequently in fever or suffering a variety of internal troubles.⁷ This lucky family seems to have been a family of invalids: the famous Doctor Benedetto of Norsia once found them all in bed ill.⁸ They were bad-tempered also, constantly quarrelling amongst themselves, incapable of listening to a third party in their disputes,⁹ not even to their intimate though untrustworthy friend Nicodemo.¹⁰

¹ "Mostrò epso sign. Laurenso che il sign. suo intende benissimo l'ambitione et mala dispositione de' Venetiani, et che veruna cosa desiderì più che trovarsi a la persecutione loro" (Nicod. to Sforza, May 11, 1463, Orig., No. 1589, f. 138).

² "Quel me doveva è che in fine se siano qua governati per modo che non habino satisfacto a persona" (Nicod. to Sforza, March 16, 1462, Orig., 1589, f. 51). It will be observed that this grave declaration preceded by eighteen months the dissatisfaction over the 50,000 ducats.

³ *Lettere di una Gentild.*, March 15, 1462, p. 256.

⁴ *Ibid.*, August 25, 1461, p. 249.

⁵ Nicod. to Sforza, October 24, 1463, Orig., 1589, f. 265; cf. April 4, 1458, Orig., 1588, f. 50.

⁶ Nicod. to Sforza, February 21, 1464, Orig., 1590, f. 52.

⁷ Letter of his son Piero, July 26, 1464, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 251, and Ricordo of the same, p. 253. Cf. Alam. Rinuccini, p. 94; Ammirato, xxiii. 92; Bibl. Nat., MSS. Ital., No. 348, f. 45 v°.

⁸ "Nicodemo wittily writes: "Non sapevano che maior honore se gli fare che aspettarlo tucti in lecto, sperando tamen che gli havesse a liberare" (October 7, 1463, Orig., 1589, f. 237).

⁹ "Me confessò haverne facta pur cum multi etiam de soy carissimi, et non gli consentono. Disse mi poy favellassi con alcuni. . . . L'odio è grande fra loro" (Nicod. to Sforza, March 24, 1462, Orig., 1589, f. 53). "Qui sono pur de' mali spiriti et tucti non se possono admonire" (*ibid.*, August 8, 1463, f. 186).

¹⁰ "Cosimo et li soy non hano qui major nè più ambizioso inimico che Dietisalvi.

And yet these disagreements did not prevent them from mourning whenever death struck one of them down. In 1440 Cosimo lost his brother Lorenzo, from whom sprang the race of Grand Dukes. In 1463 he lost his second son, Giovanni, his sole and dearest hope, as Piero, five years older, was at this time broken by gout, and hardly expected to survive his father. Hope placed in him was hope placed in a rotten branch, for Cosimo was well aware that his favourite, intemperate in eating and drinking, had ruined his constitution, and was a victim to his own excesses.¹ The grief upon his death was so desperate that it was feared his parents would not recover from the shock,² an unnecessary apprehension, for Cosimo bore the catastrophe more philosophically than any one could predict. "He neither wept, nor did his voice shake, while he spoke like a sage and a saint." He even consoled his consolers, saying that there are only two kinds of men who need consolation—those who have no memory and those who are not on good terms with their Creator.³ Christian resignation truly, and very natural a month after he had lost his favourite son; but preceding the blow it is somewhat too Christian. Here is a precious fact gathered from Nicodemo: "Cosimo quoted history and texts from the Psalms, the Prophets, philosophers, and Gentiles. He comforted us much better than we were able to comfort him. We were interrupted by the church-bells, when he prayed with marvellous devotion, and begged the Lord, if his son Giovanni must die, to put an end to his own days while yet he lived. And all this without a sigh or a tear.⁴ It was like Job upon the death of his sons."⁵

. . . Io sto cum Dietisalvi et cum ognuno qui come carne et ungia; et cognosco el mal me poria far questa lettera" (*ibid.*, August 17, 1463, f. 190).

¹ Bibl. Nat., MSS. Ital., No. 348, f. 49 v^o. See Nicodemo's despatches of 25th September, and 1st, 7th, and 10th October 1463, on Giovanni's illness and death. Orig., 1589, f. 218-237. On Cosimo's last years, Reumont, *Lorenzo il Magnifico*, c. viii. vol. i. p. 179-190.

² "Parmi vedere non perderamo luy che non perdessimo anche in poco tempo el patre et la matre" (Nicod. to Sforza, October 10, 1463, f. 252).

³ Nicod. to Sforza, November 4, 1463, *ibid.*, f. 275.

⁴ Nicod. to Sforza, October 31, 1463, Orig., 1589, f. 271.

⁵ *Ibid.*, November 4, 1463, f. 275. The very day of Giovanni's death.

Cosimo had a third son, a bastard, named Carlo, born of a slave (very likely the Circassian he had bought at Venice, 1427,¹ for sixty-two golden ducats), and consequently not recognised.² Hence the only hope of the growing dynasty lay in Lorenzo, Piero's son. Already his grandfather contemplated his marriage.³ He suffered cruelly from the void around him, and used to say that his house was too big for so small a family.⁴ Two months before his death, he felt his end approaching,⁵

¹ "De genere Circassiorum ætate annorum viginti duorum vel circa, vocatam Magdalenam, sanam et integram de persona et de omnibus et singulis suis membris tam occultis quam manifestis ac a morbo caduco" (August 1, 1427, contract of sale in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 214). Cosimo had other slaves, four of whom walked at his funeral. See Piero's note on the attendant expenses at the end of Fabroni.

² Cosimo made him apostolic protonotary and chief of the chapter of canons at Prato. There are letters of his to his father and brother (*Carteggio Mediceo*). They concern private matters and the correction of MSS. His father ordered him to translate from Greek to Latin the Letters of Phalaris. In his epitaph he is called Cosimo's son, died in 1494. See Fabroni, p. 130, and *Doc.*, p. 213. In an article in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, M. Blaze de Bury speaks of Cosimo's "sultanism," but he also mentions the depopulation of Florence, caused by his sentences of death, and he believes "logical intuition" surer than documents. We have not met with anything to justify this assertion, and M. Pellegrini, consulted by us, shares our opinion. Logical intuition is out of place in history. The gravest charge against Cosimo is the accusation of Filelfo, his enemy, and what an enemy! He obtained from somebody a husband's rights over his wife, and, what is still worse, granted his own to Pope John XXII. (Balthazar Cossa):—

"Dicam ego pontifici qui cesserat cere Joanni
Prima nocte torum, sobolemque e sanguine sacro
Partum leno suam nondum appellare rubescit."

(Filelfo, Dec. vii. hec. 4, in Charles Nisard, *Les Gladiateurs de la République des Lettres*, i. 54, Paris, 1860). Let us add that Cosimo did not hesitate to accept the dedication of Antonio Panormita's *Hermaphrodite*, a work that disgusted the cynical Filelfo and Poggio, the author of which was denounced from the pulpits, and his effigy was burned at Ferrara and Milan, while waiting to burn himself, according to the wishes of Lorenzo Valla (Nisard, *Les Gladiateurs de la République des Lettres*, i. 56).

³ He wished to marry him to Clarissa Orsini, of whom Lucrezia Tornabuoni, Lorenzo's mother, said contemptuously, "La fanciulla à due buone parti, ch'è grande e bianca" (Letter of Lucrezia to Piero, published with two others at Florence in 1859. See *Lettere di una Gentild.*, p. 6, No. 1).

⁴ Machiavelli, vii. 104 B.

⁵ "Nicodemo mio, io non posso più; sentomi mancare in modo che me accordo al andarmene" (Nicod. to Sforza, June 1, 1464, Orig., 1590, f. 212, and Buser, *Append.*, p. 422). At this time he was "in lecto da doy di in qua continuo, molto defeso et invilito" (*ibid.*). See despatches of 13th and 20th July on the progress of

and expired on August 1, 1464, in his villa of Careggi, at the age of seventy-five, after having repeatedly implored Nicodemo to recommend his son Piero to the Duke of Milan, whom he regarded, he said, as his God in this world.¹

This mighty leader of men departed life in lugubrious isolation, those around him keeping away from him in vague fear of pestilence.² Recognising the vanity of display, he begged to be buried without any funeral pomp.³ Out of respect for his wishes, or perhaps through neglect, few invitations were sent out, but every one rushed to Careggi. The body, followed by four slaves,⁴ was carried to San Marco, and afterwards to San Lorenzo. Piero occupied a *loggia* in his palace upon the route of the procession, where Nicodemo addressed him in a speech.⁵ Thus the funeral oration was pronounced by a foreigner, not a compatriot. Indeed, it was only the foreign princes and republics that regretted him, for they dreaded his successors. Letters of condolence poured into the Signory.⁶ Sforza's were the principal ones. His intimacy with the family gave him the right to sympathise with them. So tenderly did he express his sympathy, that every one wept as he read, and Piero commissioned Nicodemo to beg him to discontinue "his mournful and weeping letters, and to resign himself, as they did, to the will of God."⁷ A very curious compliment to Sforza's skill in sympathetic correspondence! Florence bore her loss no less philosophically. For a moment she may have imagined her

the disease. A burning itch spread over his body; he was a mere shell threatening to disappear unperceived.

¹ "L'affectione che vi portava era paterna, licet ve haveva per suo Dio a questo mondo, et nol dire se non l'havessi inteso da luy moltissime fiato" (Nicod. to Sforza, August 1, 1464, Orig., 1590, f. 316, and Buser, Append., p. 423).

² "Che sono quasi soli per lo dubio de la peste" (*ibid.*, August 1, Careggi, f. 313, and Buser, App., p. 423).

³ *Ibid.*, July 30, 1464, f. 311. Cf. Reumont, c. viii. p. 190.

⁴ Piero's note at the end of Fabroni.

⁵ Nicodemo to Sforza, August 4, 1464, f. 325.

⁶ Fabroni quotes a few. *Doc.*, p. 262-263.

⁷ "Che si ponga fine ad questo scriver et lachrimoso . . . che se degni accordarsi come loro a la voluntà et dispositione di N. S. Dio" (Nicod. to Sforza, August 10, 1464, from Montughi, Orig., 1590, f. 340).

fortune dependent upon the existence of this man,¹ "who dressed like a peasant and lived like a king,"² but she soon discovered that nobody is indispensable. It was only later, when the inferiority of his son was recognised, that the Signory, in March 1465, decided to inscribe upon Cosimo's tomb, at the foot of the high altar of San Lorenzo, the pompous and undeserved title of "father of his country."³

This was the beginning of the posthumous flattery that gave law to history. Before his corpse the least indulgent of his contemporaries was disarmed. Humanity is forgetful; as soon as we have ceased to suffer, we forgive those who caused our suffering. Henceforth Cosimo was regarded as the greatest man of Florence, by reason of his sense, his reputation, and his wealth.⁴ From a distance his rule was considered "douce et amiable, et telle que estoit nécessaire à une ville de liberté."⁵ Distance in space produces the same effect as distance in time. Shadows and details disappear. To see them, the piercing eye of hate is necessary. Thus Michele Bruto, a century later, at Lyons, wrote, either from the memoirs or dictation of the Florentine exiles, the victims of the Grand Duke Cosimo I., an accusing and avenging history, which shows the older Cosimo as the real author of the misfortunes of those whose secretary the historian had constituted himself.⁶ Bruto's authority is not accepted, but it is worth at least that of Cosimo's professed apologists, as far as facts are concerned. Take, for instance, Machiavelli and Guicciardini.⁷ Are they wrong when they

¹ "La grandezza de V. S. E. è perho la migliore medicina habino costoro, et dieto ad questo la vita di Cosimo" (Nicod. to Sforza, July 24, 1458, Orig., 1588, f. 96).

² Bibl. Nat., MSS. Ital., No. 348, f. 45 v°.

³ Ammirato, xxiii. 94; Bibl. Nat., MSS. Ital., No. 348, f. 45 v°.

⁴ "Uomo di senno ricchezza, e riputatione tale che mai la nostra città avea fino ad ora avuto simile" (Alam. Rinuccini, p. 94).

⁵ Comines, l. vii. chap. vi. vol. ii. p. 338, éd. de la Société de l'Histoire de France. Pius II. is no less favourable.

⁶ *Historia Florentina*, Venice, 1764; also in Burmann, *Thes. Antiq. Ital.*, vol. viii. part 1, p. 1-24.

⁷ Machiavelli, vii. 104, 105. Guicciardini, *Del. Reggim. di Fir.*, *Op. ined.*, . 30.

reproach Cosimo with having pressed on the war against Lucca before his exile, to increase his own importance, and afterwards with having impeded its progress, to ruin his enemies; with having enriched himself by the handling of the public funds, from which his credit held back his fellow-citizens; with having revenged himself upon every illustrious member of the Republic, and, finally, with having joined Sforza in the interest of his family rather than in that of his country? ¹ Even Cavalcanti is not more lenient to him, though he was in the beginning, and he wrote in Florence and was a cotemporary.

But however ready we may be to believe the best established charges of Cavalcanti and Bruto, there remains the undeniable fact that Cosimo, without much violence, imposed his rule. An authority quick to hide itself becomes tolerable, especially if it happen to succeed one that nobody could regret. How could the Florentines regard themselves as victims and humbled, since they had given themselves up, or rather sold themselves? We are reminded of the quip of Jugurtha, already appropriated by Niccolò of Uzzano: "Town to be sold if a buyer be forthcoming." Florence found her purchaser, crafty rather than brutal, and concealing corruption under a beneficent exterior.

In the distance, with time, as was natural, painful memories of this sly and hypocritical ruler, of his heavy but veiled despotism, faded. Only his unequalled liberality was remembered, for he gave without counting, or only counted to give; he lent without claiming interest, and often forgot the capital. Under these conditions, the people are indulgent to the masters who spare their purses and help them to increase them by agriculture and the bank. ² The chief thing is

¹ Michele Bruto, *loc. cit.*

² See Cosimo's advice to Sforza: "Vi conforta a sgravare li vestri subditi, tenere meglio pagati li salariati et provisionati vostri, ex consequenti più contenti, et cossi ad non spendere si largamente et provvedere che la Ill. Mad. Duchessa faccia il simile. Item ad non vendere li offitii, poy honestamente vi conforta ad non vi travagliare de benefitii, et sopractucto vi conforta ad mectere homini intendenti et amorevoli ad havere cura de ordinare, accrescere et *manegiare le intrate vostre*

to rain terrestrial manna on their path. Like a pious man, Cosimo said that he was not certain that his wealth was honourably acquired, and that he had never given enough to God to find him a debtor in his books.¹ Nobody saw the cards, and could not follow the game; they did not remark that he always gave with an object in view, as in the case of his bounty to Thomas de Sarzana, from whom, when this lettered clerk became Pope, he obtained the title of Depositary of the Church, so that at the jubilee of 1450 he had already in his bank 100,000 pontifical ducats that brought him profit.² Thanks to the power of gold, which we imagine to be modern, no man cut such a figure in his time. Comines says that his house was “la plus grande que je croy qui jamais ait esté au monde, car leurs serviteurs et facteurs ont eu tant de crédit sous couleur de ce nom Medici, que ce seroit merveilles à croire à ce que j'en ay vu en Flandre et en Angleterre.” What Comines saw in England was Edward IV. receiving the sum of 120,000 florins from Cosimo; and in France he saw the same banker offering himself as a surety for this king to the Duke of Burgundy, once for 50,000, and again for 80,000 florins.³

Indulgent to generous givers, mankind is no less so to great builders. This Cosimo well knew; it was as much through interest as from taste that he built so many splendid edifices at Venice and Padua during his exile, and at Florence after his return: the convents of San Marco and Santa Verdiana, the church of San Lorenzo and others near Fiesole, as well as in the Mugello, the beautiful altars and chapels of the Noviciate of Santa Croce, of the convent called the Angelo, and of

como ha facto luy qui che da pochi anni in qua l'ha accessute per quarto o più” (Nicod. to Sforza, March 26, 1464, Orig., 1590, f. 91). This admission did not prevent Cosimo crying “Poverty,” like a good merchant, upon occasion: “Ch'io me trovi in evidente pericolo de omne mio stato et de quello ancora non ho guadagnato io et che l'hanno sudato li antenati mey, non me par sia da haverci pazienza” (*ibid.*, May 11, 1464, f. 160).

¹ Vespasiano, *Vita di Cosimo*, c. 18; *Spicil. Rom.*, i. 342.

² G. Capponi, ii. 75.

³ Comines, l. vii. chap. vi. vol. ii. p. 337, éd. de la Société de l'Hist. de France.

the church of San Miniato *a monte*. The house in Milan, where his agent, Portinari, had an office, was the most handsome and sumptuous in the town; it is still to be seen to-day. In Paris Cosimo restored the Italian College. In Jerusalem he built an hospital for poor travellers. Naturally, he did not forget himself. Both for his own comfort and the astonishment of his countrymen, he built a house in Florence near San Lorenzo, since known as the Palace Riccardi, which to-day is regarded as a wonder of majesty and grace. He had four country-houses, kingly palaces according to Machiavelli, in the suburbs, at Careggi, at Fiesole, at Trebbio, and at Cafaggiola.¹

No year passed without his spending from 15,000 to 18,000 florins upon building; 60,000 were sunk in his magnificent palace in Florence; 70,000 in the cloisters and other edifices of San Lorenzo; 80,000 in the Abbey of Fiesole; 40,000 in the convent of San Marco, and even that was not enough.² An unpublished author does not hesitate to state the total expenses on this count at 500,000 crowns.³ Cosimo's son, Lorenzo, in the records he has left, asserts that from 1434 to 1471 he and his father spent in taxes, alms, walls, &c., 663,755 florins. "A considerable sum," he writes, "but I do not regret it. Many might think it would have been better to have some of it in our pockets; but for my part, I regard it as an honour to our house."⁴

These were Cosimo's securities against the future. "In less than fifty years we shall be expelled; but the buildings will remain."⁵ Against the worst chances he was thus preparing a refuge for his great-nephews.

In addition to the common merit of the builder, he had that

¹ Machiavelli, vii. 103 B.

² Vespasiano, *Vita di Cosimo*, c. 8, 10, 11; *Spicil. Rom.*, i. 331, 333, 335, *et seq.*

³ MSS. Ital., No. 348, f. 28 v^o.

⁴ See these records in Roscoe, *Life of Lorenzo*, iii. 98, 4th edit., London, 1800. This large sum, Sismondi says (vi. 375, note), equals in weight and measure 7,975,060 francs, or about a million of francs, and about 32 millions of francs, according to the proportion between metals and the price of labour. We have still to learn the figure of the taxes and alms to know that of the buildings.

⁵ Vespasiano, *Vita di Cosimo*, c. 16; *Spicil. Rom.*, i. 339.

of the good builder. To what extent he naturally possessed the love of arts and letters we cannot say; but by protecting them through fashion and calculation, he acquired the taste for them and made them the consolation of his old age. Brunelleschi, and Michelozzo, the two most illustrious architects of the time, furnished him with plans for his Florence house. In choosing the simpler and more modest designs of the latter, less illustrious than the former, he sacrificed nothing in elegance.¹ His constructions were decorated by the most expert artists. Following the advice of Donatello, he gathered as models all the works of ancient art that he could find, ruins of monuments, engraved stones, medals, coins, vases, jewels which were valued at 28,423 florins, not counting the silver and furniture.²

In the following chapter we shall treat of the writers and painters of the age, who, for the most part, were also sculptors and architects, and whom one hardly dares to call artists for fear of an anachronism. To mention them here would be to group them around Cosimo, whereas he was only their patron, to be guilty of an error which is often committed in according to Leo X. the honours of the splendid century of which he hardly saw a quarter, or in crediting Louis XIV. with the glory cast so profusely over his long reign by the men of genius preceding his maturity, who owed him nothing in their development—Pascal and La Rochefoucauld, La Fontaine and Sévigné, Molière and so many others who deserve to be named, though less brilliant than these.

Literature still more than art has lifted Cosimo's name to the clouds; there are more resources in the pen than in the brush, the chisel, or the mallet for transmitting to posterity the memory of men of mark; not only does it furnish testimony, but it judges and adds motives to its judgment. Imagination and invention were exhausted; they yielded place to a generation of scholars. Now wealth, powerless to evoke

¹ Leo, l. vii. c. iv. vol. ii. p. 212.

² See inventory in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 231-233.

genius, is quite capable of stimulating laborious research. Greek, Latin, and other manuscripts were acquired and copied with great expense. The price paid for the work was sufficient to encourage students to ransack for such treasures everywhere, and quantities were found. In this matter, Cosimo's only advantage over his compatriots and contemporaries was his immense wealth.

The majority, according to their means, followed his example; even Sforza, who was only a peasant and uneducated soldier, lagged not behind.¹ But this luck followed him in all things. Though Cosimo was no greater scholar than Sforza, he welcomed none the less for that the legion of scholars that the Turks drove into the path of exile.

His policy ever was to assist them in their youth or old age, to create professorships for them, and to purchase the manuscripts, with which they were plentifully supplied. Thus it was that Marsilio Ficino, amongst others, grew famous through his patronage; not only did he give him a town-house in Florence, but also a country-house, a *villetta*, at Careggi. To help students in their work he opened two libraries, one in the convent of San Marco, and the other in the Abbey of Fiesole. His palace abounded in books. Vespasiano, Poggio Bracciolini, and Cristoforo Buondelmonti were ordered to have fresh ones copied for him. "In twenty-two months," writes Vespasiano, "I engaged forty-five copyists, and I finished two hundred volumes." And the excellent paper-merchant, the ingenuous but useful biographer, gives us a list of the ancient transcripts he had made. A library catalogue left by Cosimo, which may be seen in the *Archivio Mediceo*, appeared too long for the learned Fabroni to publish among the documents of his appendix. Cosimo enriched the church of San Lorenzo

¹ Sforza wanted a Titus Livy complete in the vulgar tongue. He could not find one in his own States, and sent to Florence for one, even if it should have to be transcribed expressly (Sforza to Nicodemo, January 3, 1463, Orig., 1595, f. 298). He commands a Titus Livy just as you might a heart-shaped diamond (same date, *ibid.*, another letter) or a pair of spectacles (October 21, 1462, *ibid.*, f. 291).

by thirty big volumes, which he had written and illuminated for the choir. San Marco received a similar present.¹ The impetus was given, and for a long while it was unchecked.

Cosimo was helped by quietude within and peace without, two sources of prosperity that were strengthened by his neutrality in the quarrels of Italy and the protection accorded in Florence to the minor arts above the greater. Between them, he diminished the conflicts by encouraging delicate works in silk, that were done at home, to the detriment of woollen works, that require the competition and co-operation of so many men and trades. Besides, he was at the service of everybody, boasting that he and his were clean-handed.² Thus the banker, become head of the state, gave the best example of honouring trade and enriching both the Republic and private individuals.

These were conditions of life too unusual in Florence not to produce popularity. It is easy to understand that the people shut their eyes to the price they paid for their comfort,—venality, corruption, moral degradation, citizens transformed into courtiers, men of letters earning a livelihood by selling praises, constant rivalries, the absence of all fraternal feeling even in the most exclusive classes, the example of vice and crime given by the Medici as well as by the Holy See, the official seat of virtue; in a word, a society fallen into decadence.³

¹ See Vespasiano, *Vita di Cosimo*, c. 11-15; *Spicil. Rom.*, i. 334-338; Machiavelli, vii. 104 B; G. Capponi, ii. 76. In the Italian translation of Roscoe by Gaetano Mecherini (4 vols., Pisa, 1816) can be seen the fate of the books of Cosimo, his son Piero, and his grandson Lorenzo, published as well as in manuscript. When, after the latter's death, the Medici were exiled, the books and MSS. fell to the convent of San Marco, and were promptly sold for 1500 florins to Cardinal Giovanni de' Medicis, the future Leo X., who brought them to Rome. Clement VII., another Medicis, sent them back to Florence, where they became the kernel of the Laurentiana, to which other collections were added, notably that of the Abbey of Fiesole.

² Speaking of Cosimo's son Giovanni, on his deathbed Nicodemo wrote: "Se vede in quanta affection et gracia era de tucto questo populo, perhoche a dicto de ognuno non fo may qui el più servente et netto cittadino de luy, presertim netto de le mane, licet el padre et fratello sieno quel medesimo" (November 4, 1463, Orig., 1589, f. 275). This friendly assertion is naturally contradicted by his enemies (see above, same chapter, p. 127).

³ Villari, who can be trusted, energetically condemns the fifteenth century, and

But what is less comprehensible is that history, in our days the organ of posterity, should continue to preserve the judgment of four hundred years ago, of which even the sincerity may be doubted. Italy is still too indulgent to Cosimo,¹ with a little, it is true, of the fierce patriotism which believes it honourable to cover paternal shame, as did the sons of Noah. Germany, which has not the same reason to forget the evil and exalt the good, holds the same language because she has no sense of freedom.² England, possessing it, has not fallen into this grave error; she recognises the oppression and the moral degradation, and is indignant because of it.³ The writer is not indignant, because he deems it natural that an apple-tree should bear apples, and a young uncultivated tree but bitter fruit; but he regards it as his duty to expose the servitude of this generation, and, in exposing the facts, to point out the moral muck-heap which favoured and hastened the growth of the poisoned fruit.

Henceforth it will be impossible to say that free France does not join free England in condemning oppression and the suppression of all liberty and all morality. But in order to diagnose the evil, we must look higher than the domination of a single will, and we will find it already in the supremacy of the oligarchy. If we recognise an excuse for the Medici, it will be in the example of the Albizzi.

sees nothing to extol but its intellectual greatness (see N. Machiavelli, i. 130). How much this praise is deserved will be seen in the next chapter.

¹ See article quoted above of M. Agenore Gelli and M. Pellegrini's work in course of publication. G. Capponi is only severe against the Albizzi, whose oligarchical government is quite to his taste. A recent work, *Cosimo de' Medici*, by M. Ferrai, Bologna, 1822, may also be consulted.

² See Buser and Reumont. To an unruly mind like Leo's, everything in Cosimo is admirable, not only his cleverness and his success, but the glory of having formed men of learning and artists. He does not regret liberty, for the reason that Sienna and Lucca, remaining free, did nothing for civilisation (see l. vii. c. iv. vol. ii. p. 222). As if every town had the right of supremacy! As if Sienna did nothing for art! As if Florence herself had not done as much under free government as in servitude!

³ See Trollope, *A History of the Commonwealth of Florence*, iii. 165, 168.

CHAPTER VI.

LETTERS AND ARTS UNDER COSIMO DE' MEDICIS.

Literary movement of the fifteenth century—Reorganisation of the *Studio* under the oligarchy (1385)—Its budget (1387)—The professors—Their disciples—Leonardo Bruni—Poggio Bracciolini—Niccolò Niccoli—The *Studio* closed (1404), reopened (1412), reformed (1428)—Filelfo as professor (1429)—His vicissitudes in Florence—Scholarship—Contempt for the vulgar tongue—The literary movement under Cosimo—Falling off of the *Studio*—Erudition encouraged—Public libraries—Favours to men of letters—The Platonic school—The Platonic academy—Marsilio Ficino—Fine arts in the last days of the democracy—Under the oligarchy—The Mæcenates—Lorenzo de Bicci—Under the Medici—Architecture and sculpture—The goldsmith's art—Brunelleschi—Ghiberti—Donatello—Michelozzo Michelozzi—Leone Battista Alberti, theorist—Luca della Robbia—Painting—Study of nature—The Peselli—Masolino—Perspective—Paolo Uccello—Oil-painting—Andrea del Castagno—The miniature school enlarged—Fra Beato Angelico—Naturalism—Masaccio—The Brancacci Chapel—Masaccio's school—Filippo Lippi—Benozzo Gozzoli—Piero de Cosimo, parsimonious protector of the arts.

In tracing the history of the Florentine oligarchy,¹ if we have passed over in silence the progress of letters and the fine arts, it is not that they suffered a total eclipse under that iron regime, but that they occupied so small a space, compared particularly with that which they occupied in the times of the democracy and in the period of the Medici which followed. But in resuming this study, we should cast a glance backward, and distinguish in this magnificent development the Medici period from that of the Albizzi, just as we must discriminate among the Medici between Cosimo and Lorenzo, between the grandfather and the grandson.

Before them Florence for a while had enjoyed supremacy in the republic of letters and arts, but its glory belonged to the democratic period, while the intellectual poverty of the other provinces of the peninsula and of all Europe enhanced and

¹ See our *Hist.*, vol. vi.

lent a persuasive charm to the genius of Dante, of Petrarch, of Boccaccio, as well as of Giotto and his greatest disciples. In the fifteenth century there was little creative genius, but scholars were numerous. If Giotto still remained head of his school, his school extended all over Italy. No longer peculiar to any city or country, the men of the Renaissance were everywhere the same, imperfectly freed from the coarser instincts and the rough manners of the Middle Ages, seeking to give voice to the strivings after modern genius and its refinement; always inclined towards pleasure, but towards pleasure including beauty, order, and harmony. The Florentine oligarchy, which, as it were, sits astride the two centuries, the fourteenth and fifteenth, had already entered into the intellectual movement which was going to free Europe from the scholastic yoke, but still it held more to the past than to the future, and its intermittent and incoherent efforts towards transformation were destined to remain fruitless.

It is beyond doubt that its object was to give a certain impulse to learning. Not certainly at the start. The people had emerged from a great crisis, there was a good deal of revenge to be taken, many ruins to repair, and reforms to undertake which were considered most urgent. Let us not forget that during eight years, from 1382 to 1390, the expression of public dissatisfaction was the whole history of Florence. But from the 14th of July 1385, the reorganisation of the *Studio*¹ was decreed.

This poor university had not much of a voice to assert itself. A city of merchants valued instruction only as it proved useful in trade. In the fourteenth century there were

¹ We have henceforth in studying the workings of the *Studio Fiorentino* a valuable collection of documents: *Documenti di Storia Italiana; Statuti dell' Università e Studio Fiorentino dall' anno 1387, seguiti da un Appendice di Documenti dal 1320 al 1472*, by Alessandro Gherardi. This collection, divided into two parts, (1.) history of the Studio, (2.) scholars and lecturers, is prefaced by a discourse by Prof. Carlo Morelli, 1 vol., Flor., 1881. M. Giuseppe Rondoni has drawn from this collection a work which gives us all the principal results. See *Arch. Stor.*, 884, vol. xiv. p. 41 sq.

schools for 8000 children who learned to read, and for 1200 who were taught arithmetic.¹ Intermediate education was only a somewhat neglected branch of superior education. The latter pupils were obliged to elect a master for the primary schools; and the object of their studies, the scholastic routine of theology, the *trivium* and *quadrivium*, only moderately interested a people preoccupied with war. The students were few; in 1364 there were only eight reckoned for canon law, and in 1404 twenty-three. The salaries of the best paid masters of the canon and civil law amounted scarcely to a few hundred florins. In its best days the *Studio* only cost the State 1000 or 2000 florins, and now and again in exceptional times 3000 florins.²

Festivities more than study were the chief thought of the students. As well as Sunday, sixty religious festivals were observed,—the carnival, a fortnight at Easter, three days at Pentecost, a week at the beginning of May, and an indefinite number of days at the feast of St. John, the city's patron saint. There were in addition the autumn holidays, shorter perhaps than our own. The examinations or probational discussions were special occasions for rejoicing. The students, whom the strict regulations compelled to wear a cheap costume of black woollen texture, called *panno dell' onestà*, or the honest man's cloth, rode on horseback to carry the competitors' invitations, accompanied by their fellow-students and the beadles. If they were successful in these tests, of which one was private and the other public, fifes and trombones were played as they left the *Studio* palace, for which they paid, and which they were supposed to furnish all day at their own expense. Wine and sweetmeats were passed round, and a banquet was given or a tournament was held in front of their house; the latter was

¹ It is what Giovanni Villani says. This history remains to be written; but it seems impossible for want of documents. See Rondoni, p. 200.

² *Ibid.*, p. 200, 54, 194, and Gherardi, part ii. p. 32, part i. p. 80-93; Prezziner, *Storia del Pubblico Studio e delle Società Scientifiche e Letterarie di Firenze*, vol. i. p. 43-46, Flor., 1810; Corpi, *Le Università Italiane nel Medio Evo*, Flor., 1880.

not officially compulsory, but a recognised custom.¹ These habits were not quite those of the University of Paris. If they worked less hard at Florence, they enjoyed themselves more; instead of sitting upon straw, as in the Rue de Fouarre, they sat upon benches, and they enjoyed privileges that helped them to forget the petty but innumerable tyrannies of control.

The reform of 1385 was full of details; the Florentines did not quite understand why they felt so indifferent to the professorships they maintained. It is scarcely credible that before that time the *Studio* had no staff, while the smallest office had each its own. In creating this charge, it was decided that it should be yearly. Not daring to interfere with the recently established political powers, the sacred refuge and last illusion of a vanquished democracy, the oligarchy ventured upon a new ground, neglected by the majority. The officials were not chosen men; they were recruited from all professions. Among them were artisans, wine merchants, and soldiers, though their duties were to determine the rector's stewardship, to choose professors to review the statutes, as well as to look after the chambers, the salaries, receipts, and expenditure. Later, in 1420, Calimala's art was destined to take, through his consuls and his *arruoti*, the direction of the *Studio*.² The rector, Napoleone Parisani, assembled the students in the *Badia* for the acceptance of the new or renewed statute which would bind them hand and foot. The pill was gilded for them by limiting the attributes and rights of their chiefs. The application of this statute helped them to appreciate its merits from the authoritative point of view, since in 1473 Lorenzo de' Medicis, who reorganised the University of Pisa, enforced it.³

It is lamentable that so little is known regarding education at that time. In 1402 the teaching staff seems to have been

¹ Gherardi, p. 32-38, 79-81, 97; Rondoni, p. 51, 59, 61.

² Gherardi, part i. p. 62-75, 106; Rondoni, p. 63, 197.

³ Fabroni, *Historia Academiae Pisarum*, vol. i. part 1, c. 8, p. 72, Pisa, 1791. The second volume is dated subsequent to the fall of the Florence Republic. Prezziner, vol. i. p. 43-46.

complete; there were twenty readers, nine for law, four for medicine, two for surgery, one for rhetoric, one for logic and philosophy, and one for "natural philosophy." Note the title reader. Can we say professor of astrology and arithmetic, *ad faciendum Tacuinum*? This was Giovanni Bartoli, called *dell' Abbaco*; he was paid fifteen florins. Filippo Villani was paid eighty for reading Dante at the festivals.¹ Another, Giovanni Malpaghini of Ravenna, for the same work and on the same days, only received eight florins; and the Republic, always penurious, thought itself mighty generous.² If every professor was so poorly remunerated, there were a good many for the same subjects, though competition was then ill-viewed in letters as in traffic; some were second-rate, and the others efficient, according to the different salaries, the hours of the classes, and the importance of the subject. The bodies of the hanged³ were utilised for lessons in anatomy. Everything was regulated, the time of the year when each school was to be opened, and the duration of its various classes;⁴ but in their profession the masters were not any more hampered than their neighbours. Their liberty, it is true, was often exclusive. Domenico de Bandino, a citizen of Arezzo, would not allow Antonio, *piovano* or curate at Vado, to read Seneca's tragedies which he himself was reading. Not having the power to prevent him doing so, by prayers and persuasion he induced Coluccio Salutati, chancellor of the Republic, to undertake to force the importunate curate to choose another author.⁵

These rivalries and impediments, with the low price paid for teaching, rendered it exceedingly difficult to find good professors, and made it almost impossible to retain them. But they

¹ Gherardi, part ii. p. 115; Rondoni, p. 198.

² "Volentes maxime pro honore civitatis et utilitate civium provedere" (Provision in Gherardi, part ii. p. 127).

³ Gherardi, p. 74-76; Rondoni, p. 56.

⁴ Gherardi, p. 60, 63; Rondoni, p. 56.

⁵ See letter in Mehus, *Vita Lapi Castiglionchii*, p. 141. Prezziner gives a portion of it, vol. i. p. 47.

frequently returned, for life in this new Athens was pleasant. The two most illustrious among them—Giovanni of Ravenna and Emmanuel Chrysoloras—went away and returned. Giovanni of Ravenna, a renowned grammarian in his youth, disciple of the aged Petrarch, lectured on the banks of the Arno in 1396. He emigrated to other cities, and returned again to his professor's chair in 1412. He there expounded Dante for the second time.¹ Emmanuel Chrysoloras first made his appearance at the Council of Pisa in the train of Gemistus Plethon, who devoted all the time left him from the Council's futile debates to the propagation of Platonic doctrines. Later, in 1396, he returned as imperial ambassador, imploring help against the Turks. He consented to give a few lessons, and, delighted with his success, accepted a ten years' engagement to teach grammar and Greek for a salary of a hundred florins and the right to take as many private pupils as he chose. He did not keep his word, however, unfortunately a common failing of his time. In 1400, at Milan, he joined the Emperor Manuel Paleologos, whereupon he was offered a hundred and fifty florins, then two hundred and fifty, with an engagement reduced to five years, and the privilege to go away for short intervals whenever the plague appeared, and this offer he did not refuse.²

Interrupted as were his lessons, at least he had not taught in vain. His transient stay and his success marked an epoch. He broadened the horizon, and brought the gift of sacred fire. Scholasticism gave place to rhetoric, that was called *omnium scientiarum persuasorium instrumentum* and *rerum publicarum maximum instrumentum*.³ The *Studio* was transformed. Until

¹ Salvino Salvini, *Fasti Consolari*, preface; Mehus, *Vita Ambrosii Camaldul.*, p. 348; Prezziner, i. 50; Ginguené, iii. 281, 282; Sismondi, *De la Litt. du Midi de l'Europe*, ii. 29, Paris, 1813. Giovanni de Ravenna died in 1420.

² Gherardi, part ii. 105-110; Rondoni, p. 198. It was previously believed that after his departure in 1400 Chrysoloras did not appear again in Florence. He died in 1415 at the Council of Constance. See Hody, *De Græcis Illustribus*, l. i. c. 2, p. 12 *sq.*, London, 1742; Tiraboschi, vol. vi. part ii. l. iii. c. 2, § 9; Prezziner, i. 52; Ginguené, *Histoire Littéraire de l'Italie*, iii. 261, 262; Sismondi, *De la Litt. du Midi de l'Europe*, ii. 29.

³ Gherardi, part ii. p. 105; Rondoni, p. 198.

then no one knew Greek thoroughly. The Calabrians of Magna Græcia, Barlaam and Pilato, had formerly been able, the one to teach Petrarch his language, the other to form classes at Florence; but Petrarch never succeeded in making out Homer, and, in spite of Pilato, the study of Greek had begun to wane, and finally disappeared. They themselves knew it only imperfectly by practice. Guarino and Filelfo went to Constantinople in order to learn it thoroughly. The first refugees who landed in Italy could not improve the situation, for they knew little Latin and no Italian at all. Chrysoloras, on the contrary, was a thorough man of letters. Thanks to him, Greek, so different from Latin, was largely introduced into Florence. He exposed its beauties with all the delicacy of a man of taste, with all the dexterity of a philologist and in the phraseology of a philosopher. Two literatures, two civilisations, and only two languages co-existed, whose contact produced a flash of light. The disciples were innumerable. Among them, Roberto des Rossi, in his turn master of Cosimo de' Medicis and of Luca des Albizzi, Giannozzo Manetti, Palli Strozzi, Leonardo Bruni, Poggio Bracciolini, Carlo Marsupini, Francesco Filelfo, Guarino de Vérona, Giovanni Aurispa, Lorenzo Valla, and many others.¹ All were not born at Florence, but several taught there in turn, notably Guarino and Aurispa, more useful by their lessons than their writings.

Among those born under the skies of Tuscany, many whose names have already figured in the history of their country have recorded that history: Leonardo Bruni, as an imitator of Titus Livy,² Poggio Bracciolini continuing Leonardo, both too good writers—it was beginning the habit to write in good

¹ Details regarding these persons may be found in Prezziner, i. 52; Ginguené, iii. 261, 282, 288, 291-294; Sismondi, ii. 25, 31, 36; Leo, *Histoire de Italie*, trans. Dochez, ii. 218. On the picture of this literary movement, Villari, *N. Machiavelli*, i. 109-112.

² Leon. Bruni, *Rerum suo Tempore in Italia Gestarum Commentarius*, R. I. S., xix. 920.

Latin—not to be given posts where their practised pens might be of service. Leonardo Bruni studied the science of law; he gave it up for the language of Homer when he found that it could be learned.¹ From that time, in this curious city, he who did not know Greek was only an imperfect man of letters, and was almost looked upon as an ignoramus. The terror of a threatening future and the reunion of the Council had again thrown upon the coast of Italy great numbers of Greeks, attracted by taste or a mission to the city that so highly appreciated them. Poggio Bracciolini, the most lively and original in his style, at the same time a man of learning and of pleasure,² wrote his *Liber Facetiarum*, if we may believe his preface, only to prove that everything could be said in Latin. We can only half believe him, though he was then more than seventy years of age, and wore, as so many bachelors did, the ecclesiastical habit without taking orders, in order to enjoy its privileges and immunities. His obscenities delighted every one, and, after the *Hermaphroditus* of Panormita, the Italians could read anything. In any case, the best test of these indecent and wearisome pleasantries was the extent to which the art of story-telling had degenerated since Sacchetti's time. To Poggio's honour is the intelligent use to which he put a fortune acquired in correcting pontifical letters during fifty years. He travelled far to obtain, purchase, and save from the carelessness of monks many precious manuscripts.²

Earlier in the adoption of modern ways than either Leonardo or Poggio were Coluccio Salutati, and even Niccolò

¹ See two pretty anecdotes on the manners of Poggio and the clergy in Shepherd, *Life of Poggio*, and in Villari, *N. Machiavelli*, i. 118. Poggio, fifty-five years of age, abandoned the woman by whom he had had fourteen children to marry quite a young girl of good family, and wrote a dialogue to justify it, *An seni sit uxor ducenda*.

² See *Life of Poggio*, by G. Shepherd. Poggio's letters have been published under the title *Poggii Bracciolini Epistole, editæ a L. Tonelli*, Florence, 1831. Cf. Sismondi, *De la Litt. du Midi*, ii. 32, 33; Ginguené, iii. 303-325; Reumont, *Tavolè cronologiche*; Villari, *N. Machiavelli*, i. 117 sq.

Niccoli, who only survived the oligarchical period two years.¹ Both had been preceded by Luigi Marsigli (1330-1394), Augustine friar and doctor of theology, and a great lover of antiquity, who marks the transition between the scholasticism of the fourteenth century and the erudition of the fifteenth. Coluccio Salutati had the credit of polishing political language and of introducing into diplomatic despatches a style that he deemed, and which appeared, Ciceronian. Galeaz Maria, in a famous sally, gave proof of the literary success of these despatches, more powerful against him than a thousand cavaliers: a fatal progress in this sense, that it lent itself to treachery, but a gain if regarded from the literary point of view.² Niccolò Niccoli, in no respect a writer, and known besides as the acknowledged servant of his handmaid, spent a large fortune in donations, in purchasing books, and even made debts. He made a collection of eight hundred volumes, Latin, Greek, and Oriental, of a value of 6000 florins.³ It was a great deal for a private individual. This studious Florentine himself copied the texts, arranged them in order, corrected the faults of the preceding copyists so well that he passed for the father of this style of criticism.⁴ He first after the ancients conceived the idea of a public library; when dying, he bequeathed his own for that purpose, and he appointed sixteen trustees.⁵ In that way he responded to a new need, which attests a curious fact. From the year 1400, on the square of the Duoma a *spacciatore* was established whose

¹ Died in 1436 at the age of seventy-three. See our vol. vi. p. 74.

² Secretary from 1375, Coluccio died in 1406. See Voigt, *Die Wiederbelebung des classischen Alterthums*, Berlin, 1859, and Villari, *N. Machiavelli*, i. 103, 104.

³ Vespasiano, *Vita di N. Niccoli*, § 8; *Spicil. Rom.*, i. 624.

⁴ "Illud quoque animadvertendum est Nicolaum Niccolum veluti parentem fuisse artis criticæ, quæ auctores veteres distinguit emendatque" (Mehus, *Præfatio in Vita Ambrogii Camald.*, p. 50).

⁵ *Poggii in funere Nycholai Niccoli oratio funebris*, dans *Poggii Opera*, f. 104 vº, 1513, without indication of city. The history of Niccoli's library is found in F. Blumes' *Iter Italicum*, vol. ii. p. 42, Berlin, 1824. Niccoli is not the less the hero of a disagreeable family adventure, which may be found related in Leo, ii. 217.

business was to sell Latin and Greek manuscripts, often full of mistakes and blunders.¹ Such was the taste for letters from that time, and such the renown of this private library, that every scholar who visited Florence solicited the favour of admittance to examine Niccoli's books.² This passionate lover of letters encouraged, in addition, the spread of the classics, and in that way won the interest of many of the youths who, like Piero des Pazzi, had no other thought than that of amusement.³

In the first year of the fifteenth century, Filippo Villani, third of the name, son of Matteo, and nephew of Giovanni, and like them a historian and jurisconsult as well, was one of the professors of the *Studio*. But it was only for a few days; in 1404 the studio was closed.⁴ The war with Pisa was beginning to attract attention, and very soon the war with Ladislaus absorbed all interest and resources. For the Florentine oligarchy then, as for the democracy of old, public education had never been more than a secondary consideration. The public funds were only spent on it when the balance was large. It was for having acted otherwise that the Medici obtained, and to a certain extent merited, the glory which succeeding centuries have somewhat exaggerated.

Subjected thus to the fluctuations of politics, and suffering from the precariousness of the climate, since the least epidemic caused the people to rush away, and leave Florence

¹ See Ch. Yriarte, *Florence*, Paris, 1881. This author makes N. Niccoli, Cosimo's pensioner, one of his commercial travellers for the sale of manuscripts. In any case, it could not have been for any length of time. Cosimo returned from exile only at the end of the year 1434, and Niccoli died in 1436.

² "Nemo Florentiam, qui aliquid sapit, unquam adiit quin potius in primis Nycholai domum et libros sibi visendos putaret" (Poggio to Carlo Marsuppini, *Poggii Opera*, f. 129 v°).

³ "Attendo a darmi buon tempo." See this pleasant anecdote in M. Eug. Müntz's work, *Un Mécène Italien au XV^e Siècle*, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, November 1, 1881, p. 171.

⁴ From 1404 to 1412 the suppression or suspension was real; nevertheless several professor's chairs remained occupied. In 1405 Filippo Villani was appointed lecturer on Dante for five years, and the Signory requested a passport from Venice for Francesco Zabarella de Padua, invited to read at Florence. See Gherardi, part ii. p. 124; Rondoni, p. 194.

almost empty, how could the *Studio* have prospered? They continued to close it, reopen it, and close it again. In a happy change of Florentine affairs, March 13, 1412, provision was made to open its door, which had been closed for eight years. Giovanni de' Ravenna resumed the professor's chair, and Guarino de' Verona also occupied one two years later to give a fresh impetus to learning, and, in accordance with Niccolò Niccoli's proposal, a decree was renewed forbidding all subjects of the Republic to lecture at the *Studio*, which made it necessary to employ learned foreigners, and, as in 1348, they recalled the young Florentines who were studying abroad.¹ Very soon (1417) the power of the superintendents was extended from one to three years. Niccolò of Uzzano was one of them, and he and Palla Strozzi were the most zealous. In his will Niccolò left money for the foundation of a college, the *Sapienza*, in imitation of other cities which had a *Studio*, for receiving forty or fifty poor students, half Florentines and half foreigners, who upon the slightest condemnation should be considered as dead to the university. This generous testator instituted an income of 1000 florins in gold, gave the management of the college to the care of Calimala, and bequeathed him his possessions in the city and country, in case his heirs did not turn up.² It was no fault of his if his last wishes were not respected, and the building subsequently suspended, the funds being otherwise disposed of.³

In 1428, Palla Strozzi, who had already spent a large sum

¹ Prezziner, i. 76.

² Prezziner, i. 72-100. In 1496 the consuls of merchandise, to whom belonged the edifice of the *Sapienza*, gave it up to the convent of San Marco. In 1510 the second Cosimo kept his lions there. Cavalry was also placed there, and finally the building was transformed into stables for the Grand Duke. See Reumont, *Tav. Cron.*

³ Ten thousand five hundred florins were employed in this foundation, which was voted at the Captain's Council by 217 votes against 17; at the Common Council by 157 against 30. Pope Martin V. authorised the levying of a tax of 1500 florins upon the goods of ecclesiastics; but it was Niccolò d'Uzzano who provided the funds. See Gherardi, part i. p. 122, 125; Rondoni, p. 200-202.

in purchasing manuscripts at Byzantium, and who furnished from his own pocket a portion of the salary which induced Chrysoloras to come and teach Greek to the Florentines,¹ drew attention to the university of his country by introducing another scholar, already celebrated, and one of the most quarrelsome of that noisy century. This was Francesco Filelfo, who, according to Poggio, was the illegitimate child of a priest² and, they add, of a washerwoman. He had scarcely finished his eighteenth year when he began to teach oratory at Padua.³ Strozzi persuaded him to come to Bologna, where he gave the same instruction, as well as professed moral philosophy, for 450 crowns of gold.⁴ He came to Florence without increase of salary. Bologna paid badly,⁵ and to this spendthrift philosopher, as he called himself, a big income was necessary.⁶

In April 1429 he began his lessons.⁷ At daybreak he gave one on the ancients before more than 400 auditors, mostly men of importance and of senatorial rank.⁸ Then, after a rest of a few hours, he returned and gave another lesson,

¹ Vespasiano, *Vita di P. Strozzi*, § 1 sq.; *Spicil. Rom.*, i. 358-376.

² *Liber Facietiarum*, f. 176 r^o, and *Invectiv.*, iii. p. 177; *Poggii Opera*, 1513. Filelfo, born at Tolentino in 1398, died at Florence in 1481. His epileptic violence, we see, did not shorten his days. Cf. Meucci, *Philelphi Vita*, Flor., 1741; Lancelot, *Vie de Philelphe*, *Mém. de l'Académie des Inscriptions*, vol. x.; Nicéron, *Mémoires*, vol. vi. x.; Voight, *Die Wiederbelebung des classischen Altherthums*; Ch. Nisard, *Les Gladiateurs de la Rep. des Lettres*, Paris, 1860.

³ Sismondi, *De la Litt. du Midi*, ii. 32, 33. In Leo, ii. 217, is found a summary of the youth and peregrinations of Filelfo before his arrival at Florence.

⁴ *Philelphi Epistola*, l. i. ep. 24, to Giov. Aurispa, February 23, 1428, f. 4 v^o, without place or date. Vol. at the Bibl. Nat., Z. 697. The documents published by M. Gherardi state that to teach rhetoric Filelfo earned 225 florins (see part ii. p. 178, and Rondoni, p. 203). He exaggerated, perhaps, to add to his glory.

⁵ "Ut sine quotidianis molestiis ii mihi temporibus numerentur" (*Philelphi Epistola*, to Palla Strozzi, September 19, 1428, l. i. lett. 41, f. 7).

⁶ "Existimo tibi consuetudinem meam non esse ignotam. Non modo fœnerari non didici, sed ne parvus quidem, etc. Haud enim consuevi unquam servire nummis, sed iis uti potius pro servis" (*ibid.*).

⁷ His first letter dated at Florence is of April 19, 1429. *Philelphi Epistola*, to Palla Strozzi, f. 9 r^o.

⁸ "Auditores sunt quotidie ad quadringenta vel fortassis et amplius, et hi quidem magna ex parte viri grandiores et ex ordine senatorio" (*ibid.*, to Giov. Aurispa, July 31, 1429, l. ii. f. 9 r^o).

either on the same subject or on morals and philosophy. To protect him in his quarrel with the two Marsuppini, father and son, his rivals in teaching and erudition, the public authorities assigned him a chair at Santa Maria del Fiore, where he expounded Dante on holidays, and condemned to a fine of a hundred florins whoever should endeavour to prevent him from lecturing or occupying his chair.¹ Rather a professor than a writer, his success increased, and he was intoxicated by it. "The whole city has its eyes upon me," he wrote to Aurispa. "All love and honour me, overwhelm me with praise, and exalt me to the skies. My name is in every mouth. On my way the first citizens, the most noble matrons, give place to me."² After we have made allowance for exaggeration, due to too great an amount of self-pride, it remains no less true that Filelfo filled an immoderately large place in Florence. The faction of the Albizzi, which was favourable towards him, as that of Medici was opposed to him, was no less forced to banish him for three years to Rome because he spoke badly of Venice and its orator, threatening him that if he returned sooner he should be dragged through the streets and beheaded.³ That was on the 10th of March 1431; on the 12th, they suspended the execution of the sentence. Filelfo was forbidden to leave Florence under pain of death;

¹ Gherardi, part ii. p. 167, 171; Rondoni, p. 204. Here again we take Filelfo in the very act of exaggeration, even bordering upon falsehood: "Da niuno astracto . . . senza alcun altro o publico o privato premio a ciò fare indocto, cominciai quello poeta publicamente leggere" (phrase of Filelfo in a discourse on Dante, addressed by him to his audience; document produced by Carlo des Rosmini, *Vita di Filelfo*, vol. i.; *Monumenti Inediti*, No. ix. p. 124, Milan, 1808).

² *Phil. Epist.*, l. ii. f. 9, r^o, to Giov. Aurispa, July 31, 1429.

³ "Die 10 Martii 1431. Considerantes quod Fr. Philelphus qui legit Dantem in Civ. Flor. coram dictis DD. PP. inhoneste et temere locutus fuit contra dominationem Venetorum et contra oratorem dicte dominationis Venetorum . . . quod per totum presentem mensem Martii teneatur et debeat confinare et mittere ad confines pro tribus annis dictum Fr. Philelphum in civitate romana" (Fabroni, *Vita Cosmi*, Doc., p. 69). Filelfo speaks in no place of that sentence, but Ambrogio Traversari makes mention of it in his Letters (lib. vi. ep. 28, col. 311, at the end of his Life by Mehus). He says in it that Filelfo requested that his clothes and books be sent him at his expense. Cf. Gherardi, part ii. p. 168; Rondoni, p. 204; A. Gelli, *L'Esilio di Cosimo dei Medici*, in *Arch. Stor.*, vol. x. disp. 5, ann. 1882, p. 149 sq.

on the 11th of April he was absolved, and he returned to his former position. In May they forbade any one to molest him, no matter what was said of him, and he received the freedom of the city.¹ The Capitol after the Tarpeian rock!

But the Tarpeian rock still threatened his spiteful tongue; his enemies very soon renewed their conspiracy. It existed even among the officers of the *Studio*, a few mediocre men, tolerably lettered, if we must believe him, to whom his presence gave umbrage.² To rid themselves of so inconvenient a guest without attacking him openly, Niccolò Niccoli, Poggio Bracciolini, Carlo Marsuppini passed a decree to reduce the salaries of all the professors. They hoped that, a spendthrift, burdened with a family, and, moreover, of a bilious temperament, Filelfo would rebel against this unexpected deficit in his domestic budget, and they persuaded their colleagues to abstain from protesting in so far as they were concerned. But instead of regarding himself as defeated, Filelfo carried his cause before the public council,³ where thirty-four votes out of thirty-seven were given in his favour. In their anger his enemies retaliated by electing four officers or commissioners with full power to examine, and diminish if necessary, all the expenses of the Republic. According to their desire, their agents, under pretext that a sufficient sum had been spent on the war, suppressed the salaries of all. This time Filelfo appealed to the moderate party, and it was decided to repeal so wild a measure, which suppressed or suspended an entire institution⁴ in order to strike one man, at the very time,

¹ Salvini, *Fasti Consolari*, pref., p. 18; Prezziner, i. 92; Gherardi, part ii. p. 168; Rondoni, p. 204; A. Gelli in *Arch. Stor.*, vol. x. disp. 5, ann. 1882, p. 149 sq.

² *Phil. Epist.*, l. ii. f. 10 v°, to Niccolò, Card. of Bologna, September 22, 1432.

³ Rosmini, *Vita di Filelfo*, i. 61. To which council does it refer? The old institutions were of so little importance that they were given fancy names of public council or senate. The number of members present permits us to suppose that it referred to the Signory and to its colleges, forming a reunion of thirty-three members, to which were undoubtedly joined four ancient gonfaloniers of justice or other *richesti*, according to the usage established by quite recent provisions.

⁴ *Phil. Epist.*, l. ii. f. 12 r°, v°, to Cosimo de' Medicis, May 1, 1433; Rosmini, i. 61-62; Prezziner, i. 97-98.

above all, when once again it had been reformed to give it a fresh impetus. It had been decided that the professors should lose the privilege of being judged by their own tribunals, and that their disciples should no longer contribute, as at Bologna, to increase their salary (March 11, 1431),¹ and that was all that remained under that famous oligarchy of the political spirit of the Florentines.

Twice vanquished, Filelfo's enemies did not retire from the field. There still remained assassination. A certain Filippo of Casale, of a well-known family of paid assassins, was commissioned by them to stab the learned lecturer in the left arm and in the face. But he missed his aim, and Filelfo, despising the murderer, unhesitatingly accused Cosimo and his brother Lorenzo, solely because he was not of their party. Vainly did Ambrogio Traversari, the celebrated Camaldule, bring him their expressions of sympathy. "I cannot answer you," he replied; "but no one can hide himself from God."² Filelfo was as rancorous as a priest and audacious as a coward. "From the cesspools of his mind"³ he heaped insults upon Cosimo in prison.⁴ Cosimo once recalled, could he remain in Florence? The same day on which the Signory entered into office and put an end to the exile of the enemy that he had so gratuitously made for himself, he communicated to Palla Strozzi his fears of this cunning, wealthy, and taciturn man.⁵ Twelve days after the arrival of the new

¹ Letter of Minucci, No. 22, in Prezziner, i. 96.

² *Phil. Epist.*, l. iii. f. 17 v°, to Æneas Sylvius, March 28, 1439; Rosmini, i. 64, 65. "Qui fuerit sicarius notum est; a quibus autem conductus, et si nihil habetur certi, infamia tamen in Medices repit et Cosmum, quoniam non solum ejus factio mihi semper adversaretur, sed etiam Laurentius frater aperte multa adversus me ageret. . . . Ego quid tibi respondeam nihil habeo. Deum latere nemo potest" (Letter of Filelfo, June 5, 1433, published by Rosmini, vol. i. p. 132, Append. 12). In the letter to Æneas Sylvius, f. 17 v°, Filelfo reasons just as long on his assassin.

³ Poggio's expression. *Poggii Opera*, p. 165, in Villari, *N. Mach.*, i. 118.

⁴ Rosmini, i. 75.

⁵ "Cavendum est a pecunia cosmiana; est enim vir ille versutus et callidus, et, ut nosti, taciturnus. Tantam opportunitatem nunquam sinet elabi sibi e manibus" (Filelfo to Palla Strozzi, September 1, 1434, in Rosmini, i. 143, Append. 18).

master he spoke of returning to Sienna,¹ where he had been for some time entreated to go, if he did not prefer Bologna, or Milan, or Venice.² The attractions of Florentine life, however, retained him, until a last annoyance decided the matter. Carlo Marsuppini had just been directed to teach the same subjects as himself.³ He pretended not to be hurt; he even accepted a new engagement. But he resigned and left for Sienna, where we shall again find him.

It was his teachings and that of his colleagues which gave the tone to letters for the last twenty years of the fourteenth century. Their introduction into the *Studio* was like that of a wolf into the sheepfold. Thanks to them, erudition, the study of antiquity, together with its languages, customs, and beliefs, predominated. In their teaching, criticism was not wanting. They knew how to distinguish in the ancients that which was unworthy of them. These were the questions of the hour, and not war. If they differed upon a word, deliberately and in the best rhetoric the opponent was accused of theft, perjury, poisoning, and parricide; the grossest insults do not wound if they are in good Latin, and not followed by blows.⁴ But their Latin was still rough; they had not acquired elegance. Let a work be recognised as ancient, it was admired without reserve, even to its faults. The women did not insist upon politeness; ignorant or delighting in indecency, their part was an insignificant one. How, then, could they control the impulses of the brute that exist in all of us?

¹ October 12, 1434, to Antonio Petrucci, *ibid.*, p. 144, Append. 19.

² *Phil. Epist.*, l. ii. f. 10, to Antonio Panormita, July 13, 1432. At that date Filelfo, who had already thought of following that advice, inclined towards Milan. Rosmini, i. 133-140, Append. 13, gives letters relative to this appeal.

³ Carlo Marsuppini, the father, whom they then called Carlo Aretino, was born at Arezzo in 1399; he died at Florence in 1453 (Reumont, *Tav. Cron.*; Tiraboschi, vol. vi. part 2, l. iii. § 50; Vespasiano, *Vita di Carlo d'Arezzo*, in *Spicil. Rom.*, i. 572). Prezziner confused the facts, because he was not careful about dates.

⁴ Poggio and George de Trebizonde came to blows. See Villari, *N. Machiavelli*, i. 120, who gives curious particulars.

Obstinate study will chasten both manners and language, even the vernacular, then completely neglected; but this requires time. The vulgar tongue was held in great contempt by Filippo, Poggio, and others.¹ They even wrote their commonplace and obscene pleasantries in Latin. Did a few lines in Italian escape their practised pens, they were instantly translated into Latin. Filippo Villani speaks disdainfully of his uncle and father, who, in using the vulgar tongue to write history, "have certainly not done a very fine thing."² What was admired in Dante was the catholic thinker, and not the writer; in Petrarch, the philosopher of love, and not the poet. Niccolò Niccoli despised what the author of the "Divine Comedy" said, as well as the manner in which he said it. For this super-fastidious critic, Dante was the poet of the hosiers and bakers.³ We know in what contempt the bakers were held in Florence. He reproached him with not understanding Virgil, and with imitating him badly. He was alone in his opinion, it will be said. Not at all; many years later, towards the end of the century, Pico de la Mirandola insisted that Petrarch lacked ideas, and Dante words. Cristoforo Landino would not admit that one could speak Tuscan⁴ well without knowing Latin. Angelo Poliziano, who had a thorough command of both languages, thought himself obliged to write the history of the conspiracy of the Pazzi in Latin; and Lorenzo de' Medicis excused himself for using the common tongue.⁵

It had been employed before him, however, in writings and in speech—Cavalcanti used it with an odd and confusing sprightliness; Neri Capponi with a correct simplicity;⁶ the authors of

¹ Ginguené, iii. 348.

² Fil. Villani, *Le Vite d'Uomini Illustri Fiorentini*, p. 90-91, Venice, 1747.

³ "Poeta da fornai e da calzolari" (Leon. Bruni, *Dialog. I. ad Petrum Histrium*, MS. of the Laurentiana, and printed at Bâle. Citation of G. Capponi, ii. 180).

⁴ "Ch'era mestieri essere latino chi vuole essere buono toscano" (*Oratione di Cristoforo Landino*, Flor., 1853. Citation of G. Capponi, ii. 180).

⁵ G. Capponi, ii. 181. This author has consecrated the whole of a long and excellent chapter to considerations more literary than historical.

⁶ We have often cited it (1388-1457). It is known that, as well as the history

familiar letters, Alessandra Macinghi Strozzi, Ser Lapo Mazzei, and others gave it a lively turn, though their style, in spite of Boccaccio, lacked elegance and classic amplex. But they had changed their minds since then. Dante, by his obscurities as well as by his genius, had discouraged the imitators, and Petrarch, who had not discouraged them, had only produced the intolerable train of those Petrarchists who, by their witticisms *à la provençale*, by their butterfly flights through unintelligible ideas and incoherent images, turned from poetry and the vulgar tongue minds cultivated and purified by the study of the ancients,¹ but often empty and shallow, as was until our days the old Italian school.² A sonorous period did duty for thought. Several men of letters were already shocked by this state of things. "An artistic speech," said Pius II., "is only the work of a fool."³ Cardinal d'Estouteville hearing the eulogy of St. Thomas d'Aquinas by Lorenzo Valla, exclaimed, "Why, that man is mad!"⁴ Fashion was no less a law. There was no public or private solemnity that did not indulge in the pleasure and the luxury of these carefully "furbished" speeches, to use a favourite word of the Italians in speaking of eloquence. Every rich family, as well as the courts and governments, had their official orator.⁵ A fine school for making or improving a national literature!

of his time and that of the expulsion of the Count of Poppi, he has been attributed, with every appearance of reason, the commentaries on the war with Pisa, published under the name of his father, Gino.

¹ If one wished to cite a few representatives of the vulgar poetry, it would be necessary to name in the fifteenth century, Feo Belcari, an inferior author of lauds and representations, and the Florentine barber Domenico de' Nanni, called Burchiello (died in 1448), who wrote at random, *alla burchia*, absurdities often unintelligible, in the style of Rabelais, without the genius or even the talent. See Ginguené, iii. 481, 482; Capponi, ii. 176.

² M. Villari (*N. Machiavelli*, i. 121) gives a curious passage from Filelfo.

³ "Artificiosam orationem stultos, non sapientes nectere" (Platina, *Vita Pii II.*, p. 302, Cologne, 1574).

⁴ Gaspardo de Verona, cited by Voigt, *Die Wiederbelebung*, &c., p. 437, and Villari, *N. Machiavelli*, i. p. 121.

⁵ Many of these speeches have been published; a greater number still remain in manuscript in the libraries in Italy. See Villari, *ibid.*

In this literary chorus Cosimo was the Corypheus at Florence, as were Nicholas V. and Pius II. at Rome; the Visconti and Sforza at Milan; Alphonsus and Ferrante at Naples; the house of Gonzaga at Mantua; the house of Este at Ferrara; each turning their residence into a little Athens, where men of learning found an asylum, protection, and ease, among people who spoke Latin like themselves, and even wrote Greek verse.¹ If Cosimo strikes the imagination more than the rest, it is because he was only a banker and a merchant, and yet he rivalled popes, kings, and lords in magnificence, and such was his wealth, that it was impossible to accuse him of imitating the frog swollen to the dimensions of an ox. His gold attracted writers as light attracts butterflies, and a population more gifted than its neighbours retained them; and thus, for the third time, as in the days of Dante and Petrarch, Florence took first rank in the march of civilisation.

We need not doubt that Cosimo, like his predecessors and imitators, wished to develop the study of the ancients,² but, like them, he failed as far as the *Studio* was concerned. The *Studio* could never be in any other than a perilous position, since it was in an eternal state of undoing, like Penelope's weaving. In 1434, Niccolò Niccoli and Francesco Sacchetti once more undertook the thankless task. In 1437, during a light epidemic that lasted eighteen months, the *Studio* remained closed; it was even formally decided not to open it until after the disappearance of the plague.³ When it was reopened, it claimed public attention, in spite of the war with Lucca, because of the troubles of a visible decadence. Its budget was hardly more than some hundred or even fifty

¹ See for details Tiraboschi, vol. vi. part i. c. 2; Ginguené, c. xviii. vol. iii. p. 237 sq.; Sismondi, ii. 24-28.

² We can see on this subject, Don Agostino Fortiuno, Camaldule, *Historiarum Camaldolens*, lib. iii., Florence, 1575.

³ Here is what we read in a *Ricordo d'Entrata dell' Università preso il dì 4 Maggio 1439*, by a notary of the *Studio*: "Hassi avere del comune per danari avanzati nel 1437-38, perchè non si lesse per la moria, fl. 1936." In Prezziner, i. 104, 105. Cf. Gherardi, pref.; Rondoni, p. 205.

florins, and it was again closed from 1447 to 1452; *Defecit Studium* was written on the documents.¹ The scandals were incredible. A doctor of medicine lent a rector certain objects, and reclaiming them, was expelled upon an infamous pretext. The rector suppressed one of his assistant's salary, and robbed him of half a dozen pairs of gloves. The *Stinche* was there for those who were robbed. A student who had been cheated of six measures of wheat, and given a book in exchange, was asked to give up this book to the rector, and upon his refusal thrown into prison.² Thus we find doctors refusing the offer of a chair. The *Studio* had only two lecturers, paid sixty florins each, and they lectured, taught, and argued at San Miniato, or the Convent of the Angels, or in Ambrogio Traversari's cell in Cosimo's house at Careggi. These were private reunions of men of letters. But what about the instruction of youth? ³ It was above all in their interest that the few good masters engaged continued to form classes. John Argyropoulo, engaged from Constantinople for two years (1456), taught for fifteen years Greek and the peripatetic philosophy, taught Donato Acciajuoli,⁴ Pandolfo Pandolfini, Angelo Poliziano, John, Duke of Gloucester,⁵ and, like Filelfo, received the freedom of the city. Cristoforo Landino, by origin of Prato-vecchio, born at Florence in 1424, excluded in consequence from the Florentine professorships, was none the less, from 1457 to 1497, with little interruption, a professor of Greek and the platonic philosophy at a hundred florins a year. He also commented Dante and Petrarch. A favourite of Cosimo, Piero, and Lorenzo, in resigning his functions at the age of seventy-three,

¹ Gherardi, part ii. p. 153-160, 206; Rondoni, p. 206.

² Gherardi, part ii. p. 180, 425-438; Rondoni, p. 207.

³ Gherardi, part ii. p. 199; Rondoni, p. 208-209.

⁴ Donato Acciajuoli, born at Florence in 1428, died at Milan in 1478. He discharged under Lorenzo important diplomatic missions, and has left a commentary of the Ethic of Aristotle, and an Italian translation of Leonardo Bruni. See Vespasiano, *Vita di D. Acciaj.*, c. 22; *Spicil. Rom.*, i. 458; Bandini, *Specimen Litteraturæ Florentinæ Sec.*, xv. vol. ii. p. 9-15, Flor., 1748.

⁵ See Vespasiano, *Vie du Duc de Gloucester*, c. i.; *Spicil. Rom.*, i. 525; Paolo Cortese, *De Hominibus Doctis*, p. 43, Flor., 1734; Prezziner, i. 131.

he preserved the title and the emoluments as a reward, no doubt, for the education of the grandsons of Cosimo, the gouty Piero's children,¹ whom he taught after Gentile Becchi.

Filelfo's fate in Florence was quite other, as we shall see in his stormy history. A well-known enemy of the Medici, insulting them in exile as well as everybody else,² he had taken refuge at Sienna to continue his insults with immunity. "If I hadn't run away," he ambitiously wrote, "there would have been an end to philosophy and the Muses."³ By insinuation, he accused Cosimo of seeking to kill him a second time,⁴ and attacked him openly in bitter and obscene satires.⁵ He defied him, called him a coward, and pretended that he was too frightened to persecute him.⁶ Thus provoked, persecution was renewed, and ten months after his flight he was declared a rebel.⁷ To this condemnation he replied with bravado, and shouted for vengeance. Under the pretence of wishing to kill two of his enemies, a medical student of Imola and Carlo Marsuppini of Arezzo, who studied rhetoric, he employed an obscure Greek to kill Cosimo, who, before attempting the blow, was caught and had his hands cut off. A little before, Filelfo had claimed that the hired assassin, whom he accused Cosimo of employing against himself, should have one hand cut. The Greek, questioned, gave the name of the instigator of the pro-

¹ Prezziner, i. 132-133; Ginguené, iii. 371-373.

² Notice the insults which Poggio and Filelfo exchanged liberally when the latter left the *Studio* and Florence, in *Poggii Opera*, p. 165, 167; Villari, *N. Machiavelli*, i. 117 sq.; Ch. Nisard, *Les Gladiateurs de la République des Lettres*, vol. i. p. 136-159.

³ *Phil. Epist.*, l. ii. f. 13 r°. From Sienna, December 24, 1435, to Leonardo Giustiniano.

⁴ "Vides tu quanta arte quibusque conatibus hi perditissimi et facinorosissimi homines qui Florentiæ tyrannida nunc gerunt, cum aliis viri (*sic*) optimatibus perscriptis omnibus tum mihi in primis vitam eripere moliantur" (*Phil. Epist.*, l. ii. f. 13 v°. Sienna, April 13, 1436, to Francesco Gallina).

⁵ *Philelphi Opus Satyrarum seu Hecatostichon Decades x.* Milan, 1476, in f°; Venice, 1504, in 4°; Paris, 1508, in 4°. Cosimo is designated there under the name of Mundus, translation of Greek *κόσμος*. See Ginguené, iii. 332.

⁶ Rosmini, i. 80.

⁷ *Phil. Epist.*, l. iii. f. 17, r°, v°, to Æneas Sylvius, March 28, 1439.

jected crime, and Filelfo was condemned by default to have his tongue cut out and to perpetual exile.¹

But eternity does not belong to politics, and besides, nobody then believed in it. The ambitious and crafty Camaldule Ambrogio Traversari acted as mediator between the two enemies.² Cosimo was too well aware of the loss to Florence to refuse to allow Filelfo to return; but to avoid a precedent, of which other rebels would take advantage, he wished the Duke of Milan to plead in his favour the excuse of a foreigner. Sforza, preferring to keep Filelfo for himself, upset this plan,³ and the decision was put off. Later on, Francesco Filelfo returned to Florence with the honours of war, and died there.

Either from impotence or from distracted attention, Cosimo did little or nothing for the *Studio*. His taste was for ancient literature. Like many of his less fortunate citizens, but upon a grander scale, he profited by the exodus of the learned Byzantines, before the taking of Byzantium, to purchase their MSS. in various languages—Greek, Syrian, and Chaldean—which his vessels brought him with Alexandrian stuffs. He also profited by the carelessness of the monks, to despoil the convents of Europe of the books that their ignorant owners did not value, and sold for gold. In those researches and bargains he employed his clerks and merchants, travellers

¹ This is the phrase of the delivered sentence, which proves that Cosimo was meant: "D. Franciscum Checchi vocatum il Filelfo da Tolentino, condannato a doverli essere tagliata la lingua e bandito dal dominio fiorentino per avere voluto fare ammazzare M. Girolamo de Broccardi da Imola, o M. Carlo di Arezzo, o un cittadino fiorentino del presente governo e stato, il nome del quale per meglio si tace" (August 1436, Fabroni, *Vita Cosmi*, Doc., p. 115. Leo (ii. 220) gives a part of the text. Cf. Rosmini, i. 85; Prezziner, i. 101; Ginguené, iii. 333).

² Ambrogio Traversari, born at Portico de Romagna in 1386, named General of the Camaldules in 1431. See Mehus, *Ambr. Camald. Vita*, and Villari, *N. Machiavelli*, i. 108.

³ Filelfo's letter to Lorenzo de Medici, Milan, May 20, 1478. Text in Fabroni, *Laurentii Vita*, Doc., p. 102. See, on Filelfo and other literary men of the time, Burckhardt, *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien*, Leipzig, 1877; Voigt, *Die Wiederbelebung des classischen Alterthums*; Eug. Müntz, *Un Mécène Italien au XV^e Siècle*, in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, November 1, 1881, p. 164-170.

and missionaries: Cristoforo Buondelmonti, as well as Poggio Bracciolini, distinguished himself in this hunt for manuscripts.¹

During his exile, Cosimo was already on the look-out for a place wherein to preserve his treasures; with this object he built the library of the convent of San Giorgio in Venice. His constant occupation in Florence was the building of libraries. We have seen² that Niccolò Niccoli had decided to leave his own to the public, and among the forty trustees that he named was Cosimo. Treated like an ordinary citizen, but desiring to be first in the least matters, Cosimo persuaded the other thirty-nine to give him the right to dispose of the books as he wished, upon the condition of paying the testator's debts; he therefore placed the precious manuscripts in the convent of San Marco, rebuilt by Michelozzo Michelozzi, his companion in exile in Venice, for the sum of 36,000 ducats.³ He had them put in order by the excellent copyist called Tommaso of Sarzana, soon afterwards known as Nicholas V. He added a good many of his own, numbering in all 400 volumes. He was praised to the skies for this. But what was it compared with Niccolò Niccoli's gift of 800,⁴ and Nicholas V.'s gift of 5000 to the Vatican Library, his own creation? Andrea de Rimini and Vespasiano de Bisticci, biographer and paper-maker, with Poggio, Buondelmonti, and others, were employed to arrange it. Their post was not a sinecure, for

¹ See Sismondi, ii. 24, 28; Leo, ii. 115. On Poggio, see above, same chap. p. 178.

² See above, p. 179.

³ Vespasiano, *Vita di N. Niccoli*, § 8; *Spicil. Rom.*, i. 624; Mehus, *Ambr. Camald. Epist.*, prefatio, p. 31, 63, 82; Marchese, *Scritti Vari*, p. 46, Flor., 1855; Vasari, *Vie de Michelozzi*, ed. Lemonnier, in-12, iii. 272, 279. Henceforth, in quoting this author from the Lemonnier edition, the best, we will state the 12mo, our own edition, or the 8vo, into which the brothers Milanese have introduced numerous additions and corrections. For further details see Villari, *N. Machiavelli*, i. p. 108, note. On the reconstruction of S. Marco, Alberto Avogadro, *De Religione et Munificentia Cosmi*, l. i, in Lami, *Deliciae Eruditorum*, xii. 117, and Marchese, *Scritti Vari*, p. 43, note 2, the text of which must also be seen here.

⁴ See above, p. 178.

whenever he built an establishment or convent, Cosimo never forgot to arrange and open a library.¹

Possibly in filling his book-shelves he did not examine very carefully; his treasures were sometimes false finds. He was often deceived by old-looking vellum, the result of chemical preparations.² But it mattered not to him, as his correspondence shows us that this interest was not a very passionate one.³ Following Petrarch's steps, in which Niccoli also walked, he outstripped both by reason of his inexhaustible resources, as the renown of a Mæcenas depends not so much upon the mere love of letters, as upon the accompaniment of a full purse.

His favours to men of letters have often been celebrated. But we must distinguish between them. They were given only to those who separated erudition from politics. The men of the old school remained forgotten when not in disgrace, like Giannozzo Manetti, whose great renown as a linguist and man of science did not save him from oblivion.⁴ But if once a writer attached himself to the Medici, unconcerned for politics, he might aspire to every honour and favour. He might even be employed upon embassies, where his polished language redounded to his master's glory. Matteo Palmieri,⁵ Donato

¹ Reumont, *Tav. Cron.*; Leo, ii. 215. The fate of the library of San Marco is known. It was destroyed in 1453, and was reconstructed in 1457. After the death of Lorenzo, when the Medici were exiled, their books remained in the possession of the monks of San Marco, and were sold by them to the Cardinal Giovanni de' Medicis, the future Leo X. Transported by him to Rome, the books were sent again to Florence by Clement VII., another member of the family. They became the principal basis of the Mediceo-Laurentiana library, which was increased later by other collections, notably that of the abbey situated near Fiesole.

² Upon these falsifications M. Ch. Yriarte, in his book entitled *Florence*, gives some curious details.

³ See *Carteggio Mediceo Innanzi al Principato*.

⁴ Giannozzo Manetti has left many Latin works, among which the lives of Petrarch and of Nicolas V., the funeral orations, a chronicle of Pistoia. Vincenzo Acciajuoli has written his life. His statue is at S. M. del Fiore, like that of Poggio Bracciolini (Reumont, *Tav. Cron.*). Manetti has been spoken of in chap. v. p. 174-177, upon the occasion of his disgrace.

⁵ Matteo Palmieri (1405-75) was so renowned then, that a treatise of his was translated into French, but is quite forgotten to-day, like all his other writings, even his historical recital, *De Captivitate Pisarum* (*Tav. Cron.*).

Acciajuoli, of whom we shall treat further, served him thus in serving themselves. Each desired, as a reward of his literary renown, the permanent post of secretary and chancellor of the Republic. Men of letters had been sought for earlier, now it was necessary to choose between them. This post had been occupied by such masters of style as Leonardo Bruni and Poggio Bracciolini, the two Carlo Marsuppini, father and son, Benedetto Accolti, Bartolommeo Scala, native of Colle, a favourite of Cosimo from his youth.¹ One of their successors was Niccolò Machiavelli.

The interests and caprice of Cosimo showed startling differences in his favourites' fortunes. Paolo Cortese became so rich as to place his castle at the disposal of the learned men of whom sometimes he wrote the life. Poggio Bracciolini, with his twelve sons and two daughters, all born out of wedlock from the same mother,² was exempted from all taxation under the pretext that he had come to Florence to live by study and not to gain by traffic; but Filippo Bonaccorsi, a native of San Gemignano, like Cortese, had to travel in search of fortune, and only became a personage in Poland where he took to writing history.³

It was servile zeal and not literary talent that Cosimo rewarded in men of letters and authors. Let it be well understood that if he served letters, it was by the purchase of manuscripts and the creation of libraries; above all, by his truly original claim in the Platonic Academy. He conceived the idea in attending the classes of the aged George Gemistus, such an enthusiastic admirer of Plato that he was named Plethon. Called to Florence to sustain the rights of the Greek Church in the Council, though his book had been burned because he attempted to restore the Pagan gods, Gemistus taught his pupils Platonic philosophy, asserting that they could not at the

¹ See D. M. Manni, *Bart. Scala Collensis, equitis Florentini ac Romæ Senatoris Vita*, Flor., 1768.

² Poggio married at fifty-five Selvaggia de Ghino Manenti des Buondelmonti, who was eighteen. See Ginguéné, iii. 303-325; Sismondi, ii. 32, 33; Leo, ii. 218. See above, p. 178, n.¶1.

³ G. Capponi, ii. 169, 170.

same time accept the Peripatetic school, and that they must choose between the two.¹ He was supported by Bessarion, and opposed by Theodore Gaza and George Scholarius, also called Gennadius, both disciples of George of Trebizonde in the art of invective and insult.² But he soon dipped the scale. Who could hesitate long between Aristotle, who only seemed novel because they were beginning to read the original, and Plato, who was really novel, since they had never even read him in translation? At any rate, Cosimo did not hesitate. He yielded to his old guest's desire to restore the Platonic Academy,³ and established it in his own gardens, and in all Europe it was the first institution consecrated to science which broke loose from Scholasticism.

This hothouse plant at first seemed to depend upon one man: death threatened it when Gemistus Plethon returned to the Peloponnesus. But Cosimo was fortunate enough to find another director. He had living with him his doctor's son, Marsilio Ficino, born in 1433, and attached to him in 1451. Of a pleasant nature and agreeable disposition amid so many disputants, of an exemplary life amid so many reprobates, partly perhaps through his weakly constitution, which claimed

¹ See the book of Gemistus Plethon, *De Platonicæ atque Aristotelicæ Philosophiæ Differentia*, Bâle, 1574.

² George of Trebizonde was, however, very moderate in his invectives, confining himself to calling his adversaries *non philosophos, sed philotenebras*. Bessarion reprimanded him in two writings, of which one bears the title *In Calumniatorem Platonis*. This dispute is recorded at length in the *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions*, vol. ii. p. 775, ann. 1717, *Querelles des Philosophes du XV^e. Century*, by M. Boivin, sen. See also Fabricius, *Bibliotheca Græca*, vol. xii. p. 1 sq., Hambourg, 1809, where is found Leonis Allatii *De Georgis et eorum Scriptis Diatriba*. The three Georges were Geo. Gemistus, Geo. Scolario, Geo. de Trebizonde. M. Villari has given a substantial summary of the affair in *Storia di Girolamo Savonarola*, i. 49-66, Flor. 1859; Tiraboschi, vol. vi. part i. l. ii. c. 2, § 16 sq.; Prezziner, i. 128; Brucker, *Historia Philosophia*, Leipzig, 1743.

³ This origin is found related in the dedicatory letter by Marsilio Ficino at the beginning of his translation of Plotinus. It is found on page 1320 of the volume entitled *Sententiæ pulcherrimæ cum multarum rerum definitionibus ex Marsilii Ficini operibus collectæ*, Bâle, 1576. The volume commences on page 1013. The important phrases of the passage, which is here in question, have been reproduced by Leo, ii. 221.

solitude,¹ Ficino was a devout Aristotelian; it was only later that he was converted to the cult of Plato. From that time forward his fervour was such that he constantly kept a lamp lighted before the bust of his idol, as if it were a sacred image, and, what was better still, published the first complete and exact translation of him.

He was, however, only a Neo-Platonist of Alexandria. His philosophy was that re-hash of the mother-doctrine transplanted from Greece into Italy by its last followers.² He was not even a pagan. A priest at forty-two, and canon of San Lorenzo by favour of the Medici, he endeavoured to reconcile Platonism with Christianity. A singular Christian, who, to prove his religion, had recourse to Plato, Porphyry, Virgil, and the Sibyls,³ and who shared the grossest superstitions, such as a belief in spirits, from which the Materialists themselves were not exempt.⁴ In the quarrel between the Platonists, who held that Nature acts by design, and the Peripatetics, who believed that, having learned her business, she acted from instinct, he took up an intermediate position. He held that in all things there was a third essence, a soul, immortal, although inseparable from the body, and that Plato's idea can be reconciled with Aristotle's form. The notion of Divinity, which for the Jews is the Almighty and nothing else, and for the Christians the Father of believers, was for the Neo-Platonists the philo-

¹ See on Ficino, Leopoldo Galeotti, *Della Vita e degli Studi di Marsilio Ficino*, in the *Arch. Stor.*, n. ser., vol. ix. part ii. p. 27-91; Prezziner, i. 128; Ginguené, iii. 362.

² Villari, i. 52.

³ See Brucker, *Hist. Phil.*; Giov. Corsi, *Marsilii Ficini Vita*, published by Ang. Mar. Bandini; Villari, i. 57.

⁴ Landino, so grave, drew out the horoscope of religion. He concluded upon the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn that a great religious reform would take place November 25, 1484. Let us note as a curiosity that Luther was born 1483 or 1484. (Landino, *Commento alla Divina Commedia*, Flor., 1481, in Villari, i. 61.) Machiavelli is inclined to believe that the air is full of spirits compassionate to mortals, and who warn them by baleful auguries of the evils that await them (*Discorsi*, l. i. c. 56, p. 217). Guicciardini, much more positive, declares that he saw spirits (*Ricordi Politici e Civili*, Ric. 211; *Opere ined.*, i. 162). The century that accepts spirit-rappers and turning-tables had better not cast a stone at the subtle Florentine.

sophic Absolute. They were on the high-road to Pantheism, though they imagined by means of Plato they were renewing Christianity, and giving it a more rational form.

In principle these elevated speculations lacked a basis; philosophy was only stammering. For a long while the scholars of the time contented themselves with extracts from the ancients upon glory, friendship, contempt of death, sovereign good, happiness, and virtue. And in reading Plato, they hardly saw in what he differed from Aristotle, or if he differed at all. If Marsilio Ficino started by a study of Platonism, he had only bad and incomplete translations, and Cosimo induced him to study Greek in order to reach the fountain-head. He did so, taught what he had learnt, communicated the unripe fruit of his meditations at first to Cosimo's sons and grandsons, then to a larger audience at the *Studio*, and finally to the followers that surrounded him and his master in the gardens of the Medici Palace: Cristoforo Landini, whose *Disputationes Camaldulenses* give us all the details of the discussions of the Neo-Platonists; Leone Battista Alberti, a scholar, writer, and architect, one of the great men of the century, Donato Acciajuoli, Antonio Canigiani, Naldo Naldi, Peregrino Agli, Alamanno Rinuccini, Giovanni Cavalcanti, and others.¹

Such reunions have always been common. In the seventeenth century Malherbe and Conrart copied them, though with an aim less serious. In Florence the learned gathered in Marsigli's or Traversari's cell. When they met under Cosimo's roof, the importance of the place, the presence of the host, the introduced ceremonies, drew much more attention to the existence of a society avid of learning, and much more spontaneous than was believed. On November 7,

¹ See this excellent exposition in Villari, *G. Savon.*, i. 53-59, and *N. Machiavelli*, i. 172-189. It was from the orthodox point of view that Tiraboschi wrote upon the subject of the Platonists of Florence: "Il lor trasporto per esso (pour Platon) gli condusse sino a scriver pazzie che non si possono leggere senza risa" (vol. vi. part. i. l. ii. c. 2, § 18).

anniversary of Plato's birth or death, according to Alexandrian tradition, Ficino revived the customs of Plotinus and Porphyry, who celebrated it; there was a public dinner, followed by a philosophical discussion, which terminated in the apotheosis of Plato, a sort of religious hymn. There was nothing in these so-called Platonic reunions of the Academy to recall the innumerable academies by which Italy afterwards incurred general ridicule; there were no rules or statutes. The name was simply a remembrance of Greek culture, and of the master they wished to honour by reviving his memory.

Ficino was the soul of the Academy. It was born and died with him. The cement and chain consisted in the affection his friends bore him and the faith his disciples had in him. There was no real philosopher among them; they all reproduced his ideas, even in the second period, when Lorenzo, Cosimo's grandson, and Pico de la Mirandola, made a brilliant addition to the aged Ficino's circle. As for Cosimo, he was but a courteous host from the beginning.¹

As we know, he was repaid his hospitality and courtesy with interest. The learned, who knew how to profit by the aspirations they provoked, constituted themselves the dispensers of glory, promising an eternal eulogy, threatening an indelible stain, according as the object of their life was served or neglected, an object all the dearer as it was generally their own interest. Therein we see the reflex action of things upon men, and of men upon things—men of letters upon Cosimo, and Cosimo upon men of letters.² It was so with the painters and sculp-

¹ Many writers have spoken of the Academy: Ficino in several letters; Giov. Corsi in his *Vita Ficini*; Fabroni, Tiraboschi, Roscoe, Gibbon, Ginguen , and more recently Harford, *Life of Michael-Angelo Buonarroti*, London, 1858; Sieveking, *Die Geschichte der platonischen Akademie zu Florenz*, Hambourg, 1844; Galeotti, *Saggio Intorno alla Vita ed agli Scritti di M. Ficino*, in *Arch. Stor.*, n. ser., vol. ix. disp. 2, and vol. x. disp. 1. In Bandini's work (*Specimen Litt. Flor.*, sec. 15) there is a biography of Landino. Upon the doctrines, Ritter, *Geschichte der neuern Philosophie*, part i. l. ii. c. 4; Schultze, *Geschichte der Philosophie der Renaissance*, Jena, 1874.

² J. Burckhardt has clearly set forth this r le of the men of letters (*La Civilisation de la Renaissance en Italie*, Florence, 1876).

tors too; they returned in glory what they received in commissions. In the chapel of the Carmine the Medici are placed among the witnesses of the miracle of St. Peter and St. Paul, while in the Campo Santo of Pisa they served as models for the figures of the patriarchs.¹ It was natural, but it is none the less one of the curiosities of the history of the times.

Neither letters nor arts belong exclusively to the Medici. Their claims throughout Italy are older. Tuscany, that had produced Florence, that had encouraged Giotto and Orcagna, had already established its rights. If the two schools of the Giottos early marked the decadence complained of by Taddeo Gaddi,² through want of genius, excessive imitation of their master, and an affectation of long flowing gowns, at least they were still distinguished by a respect of the great laws of composition, misunderstood and forgotten under the rule of the Medici.³

The last troubled days of the Florentine democracy had not proved quite unproductive of art. It was the time of Giotto's undisputed sway. Many works, of which the fifteenth century gets the glory because it finished them, were ordered and begun amidst the confusion and terrible agitation of the demagoguery. In 1360 the building of Santa Maria del Fiore, so long interrupted, was taken up again. In 1363 the monument of Pier Farnese was raised, from the designs of Agnolo Gaddi. In 1366 was begun the silver altar front of the Baptistery, which was only finished in 1480. In 1371 Francesco Volterra executed the frescoes of Job in the Campo Santo of Pisa. In 1374 it was decided to build the *loggia* of the *lanza* or lansquenets,

¹ See the work of M. Eug. Müntz, *Un Mécène Italien au XV^e. Siècle*, in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, November 1, 1881.

² In a conversation reported by Sacchetti. See our vol. v. p. 466, 467, note 1.

³ See Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *A New History of Painting in Italy*, i. 506; H. Delaborde, *Études sur les Beaux-Arts en France et en Italie*, i. 102; A. Bartoli, *I Precursori del Rinascimento*, Flor., 1874; Fiorillo, *Geschichte der zeichnenden Künste von ihrer Wiederherstellung bis auf die neuesten Zeiten*, Göttingen, 1789-1808; Riepenhausen, *Geschichte der Malerei in Italien nach ihrer Entwicklung Ausbildung und Vollendung*, Stuttgart, 1810 (unfinished); Schnaase, *Geschichte der bildenden Künste*, Düsseldorf, 1842-44.

and on September 22 of the same year the foundation was laid.¹ If the nude was ill seen under ample draperies, the magnificence of the costumes, and the glorious feasts of a city where every one lived in the open air, in the sun, under a blue sky, were food for art. And the nude was not quite absent, as may be thought. In Rome, and probably elsewhere, there were races of naked men, as in the old games of Greece, and obscene processions as in the circuses of the Roman empire,² while the loose morals of the artists hardly induce a belief that they lacked occasions to study the nude.

A change was promised not so much in art as in the condition of the artists. In old Florence an architect, a sculptor, or a painter was a tradesman like any other, and not distinguished from a mechanic: for example, a varnisher was classed with a painter. The only difference between them was the length of their apprenticeship, which in all cases was long; twelve years in the fourteenth century, according to Cennino Cennini.³

Under the oligarchy, in the relative calm that came with oppression, a taste for art as well as for letters began to develop in Florence as elsewhere. Niccolò Niccoli, who was so fond of books,⁴ also loved pictures, sculpture, and every manifestation of art. His house, like his library, was an open museum.⁵ Poggio also admired and collected ancient works of art, above all sculpture, but rather for his own enjoyment than for the delight of others. He adorned with them "his academy in the Val d'Arno, where he hoped to enjoy rest."⁶ Niccolò of Uzzano, who gave a good deal to the church of Santa

¹ Reumont, *Tavole Cronologiche*. On the Loggia, see our vol. v. p. 461.

² Taine, *Philosophie de l'Art*, i. 170, 178, Paris, 3rd edit., 1881.

³ "Sappi che non vorrebbe essere men tempo a imparare," &c. Cennino Cennini, *Libro dell'Arte o Trattato della Pittura*, cap. 104, in Janitschek, *Die Gesellschaft der Renaissance in Italien und die Kunst*, p. 109, n. 67, Stuttgart, 1879.

⁴ See on his library, same chapter, p. 178.

⁵ *Poggii Opera*, p. 267, in Roscoe, chap. ix.; trad. vol. ii. p. 244, n. 2.

⁶ Poggio to Niccolò Niccoli in Roscoe, *ibid.* Roscoe (p. 245) publishes the translation of several passages of a letter by Poggio showing his passion for sculpture.

Lucia, wanted to place there his portrait painted by Lorenzo of Bicci. Giovanni de' Medicis, Cosimo's father, also ordered portraits of this same painter for the old family palace.¹ Simultaneously the Pitti and the Pazzi contributed to the progress of art by their handsome commissions.

Lorenzo of Bicci, architect and painter, the best and most careful of his somewhat unproductive day,² carried on the Giottesque tradition in the midst of the new school, just as the Byzantine school had flourished side by side with the Giottesque. His grandson, Neri of Bicci, remained faithful to this tradition when all had forsaken it.³ Before that time, and with Lorenzo, another painter strove to imitate Giotto, one of the numerous and obscure Lippi who figure in the book of art.⁴

There were many causes for the stagnation of art under the oligarchy. Chance was niggardly of genius; the men of learning, given up to their studies and philological squabbles, disdained and neglected it; for Niccoli and Poggio, associating the museum with the library, were exceptions. The others only sought enlightenment in the remains of antiquity, and finding little therein, promptly turned their attention elsewhere. As for the Popes, they never patronised books and art at the same time.⁵ But encouragement is not so important as we imagine. From the year 1423 the Medici began to court fame by costly buildings. Almost at their own expense they restored the old

¹ This palace, which fell to Lorenzo, Cosimo's brother, was afterwards called Palazzo Ughi, and then divided into several houses. It was contiguous to the palace, begun by Cosimo and finished by the Riccardi, whose name it still bears. See Milanese in Vasari, ed. Lemonnier, in-12, vol. ii. p. 226, n. 1.

² 1350?—1420. Vasari, ed. Lemon., in-12, vol. ii. p. 225—234. The dates are given by Milanese, who warns us that life is a tissue of errors, and proves it in his notes.

³ Niccolò of Uzzano applied to Lorenzo of Bicci to build his College of Wisdom. Upon this, see as well Vasari, Ranalli, *Storia delle Belle Arti in Italia*, p. 121, Flor., 1845; Rosini, *Storia della Pittura Italiana*, ii. 245, Pisa, 1840; Rio, *De l'Art Chrétien*, i. 355, Paris, 1874; Delaborde, i. 104.

⁴ 1354—towards 1410. Vasari, ed. Lemon., in-12, ii. 205—208; Ranalli, p. 122.

⁵ See Eug. Müntz, *Mécène Italien au XV^e Siècle*, in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, November 1, 1881, p. 178.

basilica of San Lorenzo that was burnt down, and at their bidding the family tombs were set up in 1432. Genius was still inert; when it began to breathe, the Medici profited by it. They were under obligations to art. Their benefits were still subordinate to caprice or calculation; and, in spite of all that has been said, they were too niggardly to have supported or encouraged talent more than others.¹

It was the good fortune of the Medici, as well as the glory of Florence, that this period should have been made illustrious by three men of incomparable genius, educated under the oligarchy in a goldsmith's workshop, according to the habit of the times. Brunelleschi (1377-1446), Ghiberti (1378-1455), Donatello (1386-1468), at first sculptors, were afterwards architects and painters too.² In the fifteenth century these branches were not separate; the one involved the other two. Sculpture, for the second time, regenerated art through the study of the antique—an irresistible stream which carried every one away. By it Christian art was relegated to a second place. Building was continued and churches were decorated, and it is a mistake to imagine that the Medici wanted to turn their compatriots from a religion that teaches submission to the great; but there were churches everywhere; what was wanted were palaces, and in palaces pious pictures being out of place, hunting-scenes, tournaments, amorous and mythological adventures, served to recall ancient art, now so long forgotten as to appear quite fresh.

The education of the apprentices to art in goldsmith's work

¹ Cosimo might very well lock Filippo Lippi up to force him to work (Fabroni, *Vita Cosimo*, texts, p. 157); but in a letter to Giovanni de' Medicis, who had given him an order for which he had laid aside work undertaken at Prato, Lippi maintained that 100 florins would not be too much. He was only advanced fourteen, and had much difficulty in obtaining any more (July 1457, in Gage, *Carreggio Inedito d'Artisti*, i. 175. Cf. Crowe and Cavalcaselle, ii. 331).

² We know that Ghiberti painted a chamber for Pandolfo Malatesti at Rimini, and it might be doubted, if we were not sure, that he ever held a brush by his sculpture. As for Brunelleschi, if he did not paint, he was able to teach drawing to Masaccio. See Rosini, ii. 246. Brunelleschi was also an engineer. We know the story of his chimerical works in the plain of Lucca, although Vasari, through jealousy of his artistic fame, does not mention it. See our vol. vi. p. 340.

was important: by it we may explain the similarity of talent and method. The goldsmith was at that time in vogue,¹ as there were many rich men with an intelligent taste for vessels and arms, bedsteads, chimney-pieces, and inlaid furniture. In working stucco, wood, marble, and fine stones, the goldsmith's apprentice learned to accentuate outlines and delicate fillets, and later, turning sculptor or painter, was capable of bringing out muscles when the science of anatomy enabled him, and of entering the road of a healthy realism, the only right one when not pushed to excess.²

Having perfected his taste and skill in gold-work, and having steeped his mind in philosophy and the doctrines of Dante, Filippo Brunelleschi went to Rome. There he studied the old buildings, more numerous then in their ruins than in our days, or even in Leo X.'s time, and having discovered the secret of their form and solidity, the various systems of construction, and the ways of working materials, he returned to Florence, where he received the order to continue the gigantic undertaking of Santa Maria del Fiore, begun by Arnolfo of Cambio,³ and only equalled by St. Peter's of Rome. If he imitated ancient art and borrowed the cupola of the Pantheon, Brunelleschi in doubling it, substituting the pointed for the round arch, and thus increasing the solidity of the vaults, surpassed his models and showed himself original. A rigorous observer of just proportion, he reduced ornamentation to an accessory, which should accentuate the projections and divisions of a building. He was paid three florins a month for fourteen years, when he finished this work, the possibility of which, as well as its solidity, was passionately contested. Time has answered, and the masterpiece still remains as young as on its first day. Michael Angelo, with his eagle glance, judged at once that nothing better could be done, and Cosimo sent Brunel-

¹ Already Niccolò Pisano sculptured statuettes.

² See Cicognara *Storia della Scultura*, passim, Prato, 1823; Vasari, ed. Lem., in-8, ii. 168, n. 1. Cf. Taine, *Voyage en Italie*, ii. 134, Paris, 1880, 4th edit.

³ On Arnolfo de Cambio, see our vol. iii. p. 487, 488.

leschi to Eugene IV., saying he was courageous enough to turn the course of the world.¹ Among so many doubts and jealousies, we must praise this serene sagacity.

That Brunelleschi had lost what a few may call the sentiment of religion, which is only the tradition of the hieratic art of ancient times, we need not doubt. He built churches and palaces upon the same antique models: San Spirito, San Lorenzo, San Marco, the abbey situated at the mountain of Fiesole,² the Pitti Palace, which he only lived to finish as far as the first storey, and the Quaratesi palaces ordered by Jacopo des Pazzi, the famous enemy of the Medici.³ But, like Giotto, he had the taste for natural forms, and the art of selecting the most appropriate; he loved simplicity in grandeur. We know how he abused Donatelli's ugly Christ, and, defying him to make a better one, compelled his rival to acknowledge his superiority.⁴ If, as they said, his head was in the clouds, his feet touched solid earth; he improved the technicalities of his art; he taught the laws of perspective to the mosaicists in wood and marble.⁵ He advanced art in the direction of truth and reality, and, in building temples for churches, incurred, like many others, the reproach of being a pagan.

Not an unjustifiable reproach certainly, but those who flung it at the fifteenth century ought to have included the fourteenth also. Piety and chastity were then not more frequent;

¹ "Io mando a V. B. un uomo a cui, così è grande la sua virtù, basterebbe l'animo a rivolgere il mondo" (Quotation from Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, iii. 235, n. 2). On this great work of Brunelleschi, see *Metropolitana Fiorentina Illustrata*, Flor., 1820; Cesare Guasti, *La Cupola di S. M. del Fiore Illustrata*, Flor., 1857, and *S. M. del Fiore*, 1887; Ranalli, p. 135-139; Rio, i. 312; Delaborde, i. 104; *Geschichte der italienischen Kunst*, iii. 24-31, Leipzig, 1870.

² Fabroni, *Vita Cosimi*, text, p. 194. San Spirito, which shows an incomparable harmony in its whole and in its lines, was begun in 1433 and finished in 1451.

³ The Quaratesi Palace, formerly the Pazzi, is situated in the Via del Proconsolo. See Ranalli, p. 133; Rio, i. 314.

⁴ Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, iii. 198, 246. Brunelleschi's Christ may be seen at S. M. Novella; Donatello's is at S. Croce.

⁵ Reumont, *Tav. Cron.*

and if the sentiment of religion was less rare, religion itself was wanting in purity. The Scaligeri of Verona, the Estes of Ferrara, the Della Polentas of Ravenna, the Malatesti of Rimini, the Visconti of Milan, Castruccio, Robert of Naples, and also Clement V. in his *lupanar* at Avignon, equalled the Medici in their appreciation of the famous mythological nudities which are said to have ruined Christian art. The only difference was that in the fourteenth century commissions for this sort of work were few, as it was not yet the fashion. If Giotto, of joyous and pagan temperament, only painted sacred and serious subjects, it was because he did not solely paint for pleasure, but also for bread. The strong impulsion of the Renaissance was necessary to force artists to free themselves from the prevailing taste by disinterested study, and little by little to transform it.¹

It was precisely this proud independence that enabled Brunelleschi to widen and enlarge everything he touched. We cannot say the same of Lorenzo Ghiberti, with whom it would be difficult to compare him. In 1420 they were both named architects of the Cupola; three years later Ghiberti retired, confessing thus his inferiority in architecture.² His superiority lay in sculpture. His bas-relief for the gates of the Baptistery, better calculated to please the eye, was preferred to Brunelleschi's, which was perhaps more in keeping with the true laws of art.³ Ghiberti, less emancipated from the goldsmith's tradition, was more skilled in the execution of finished work.⁴

All his talent is seen in his memorable gates. Wishing to imitate Andrea Pisano's gate, conceived and executed

¹ See, besides the works quoted, Ruhl, *Denkmäler der Baukunst in Italien*, Darmstadt, 1821; Stieglitz, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Ausbildung der Baukunst*, Leipzig, 1834; Lübke, *Geschichte der Architektur*, Leipzig, 1855; Amico Ricci, *Storia dell' Architettura in Italia*, Modena, 1857.

² Reumont, *Tav. Cron.*

³ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, ii. 273. Both these bas-reliefs, representing the sacrifice of Abraham, are in the Uffizi Museum, Nos. 391 and 392.

⁴ Benvenuto Cellini, introduction to his treatise on gold-work; Rio, i. 347.

upon Byzantine and Italian principles—few details, simple indications—he brought to the work the instinct of a painter; ¹ he sought effect in action rather than in perfection, and, with his father Bartoluccio's help, ² he confined himself to a few figures sharply detached from the background. But the success of this gate having assured him a commission for another, ³ he obtained at great expense a collection of Greek fragments. These opened his eyes to a new light: he strove for finish in his work, and plastic effect, which he obtained by means of the perspective already introduced into painting, but unknown in sculpture. The small squares of the third gate are so many pictures in relief, a method which has only produced this work of art. Painting and sculpture are apart, and do not gain by union. ⁴

Ghiberti clung to his system, pleasing in its novelty; ⁵ to it he owed the vogue and popularity ⁶ to which his solid merits entitled him. If he is not the chief of the great school which does not deem it undignified to look at Nature, at least he marks the new departure: his workshop (for studio is a modern word) sent out masters who headed this movement,

¹ "L'animo mio alla pittura era in grande parte volto" (second comment of Ghiberti, in Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, vol. i. p. xxx.).

² The second gate, finished in 1424, was placed, April 9th of same year, in front of the Duoma. Afterwards it was put on the north side. It weighed 34,000 pounds, and cost 22,000 gold florins. See Reumont, *Tav. Cron.*

³ The third gate, ordered of Ghiberti January 2, 1425, was only put up June 16, 1452. See Reumont, *Tav. Cron.*

⁴ Baldinucci, *Opere, Delle Notizie de' Professori del Disegno da Cimabue in qua*, Florence, 1768, Dec. i. part i. sec. 3, p. 1-50; Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, iii. p. 100, n. 1; Forster, iii. p. 46-65; Ranalli, p. 153-159; Perkins, *Tuscan Sculpture from its Revival to its Decline*; Crowe and Cavalcaselle, ii. 274-276; Rio, i. 343; Rumohr, *Italienische Forschungen*, ii. 230, 243; Leo, *Hist. d'Italie*, trad. Dauchez, ii. 211. The difference of appreciation of Ghiberti's two gates is the result of this difference between them: Reynolds and Crowe prefer the second, Vasari and Rumohr the third. This latter we know Michael Angelo declared to be worthy to be the gate of Paradise.

⁵ This system is found again in the monument of San Zanobi in S. M. del Fiore, for which he received the order in 1439. See Gaye, i. 543.

⁶ "Poche cose si sono fatte d'importanza nella nostra terra che non siano state diseguate e ordinate di mia mano" (second comment of Ghiberti, Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, i. xxxvii.).

Donatello in sculpture and Uccello and Masolino in painting. They produced what had never yet been done—profane works distinguished by noble aspirations towards the ideal.¹

The third in age of this admirable trinity, if a difference of eight years may be counted, but the first in action, was Donato, more commonly called Donatello.² No more an architect than Ghiberti, like him, he cannot be, strictly speaking, compared with Brunelleschi, whom he had nevertheless followed in Rome. The works of the Roman decadence had not developed in him a sense of the beautiful which his rough and powerful genius needed, to help him to discern in Nature what is worthy of reproduction, and he keenly felt his weakness as well as his strength. He once said to Brunelleschi, "The Christs are yours; the peasants are mine."³ But his worship of Nature was the first and great step in the path of the Renaissance, for it is necessary to understand the value of existing things before we can choose between them. For the rest, he was capable of moderating his impetuosity and of representing antique repose, even when a subject like Judith relieved him of restraint.⁴ If he were more dexterous than others in sculpturing a figure,⁵ he could also invent and compose a story: witness the bas-

¹ It is absurd to pretend, as Rio does (i. 347, 354), that Ghiberti's idealism was the reason of his disfavour with the Medici. We read in Fabroni: "Hic quoque a Cosmo liberaliter atque honorifice tractatus multisque in rebus adhibitus fuit" (*Vita Cosmi*, text, p. 160).

² In the *Catasto* he figures under this name: Donato de Niccolò de Betto Bardi. Upon Donatello, see the recent work of M. Müntz, *Les Artistes Célèbres, Donatello*, Paris, 1885.

³ Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, iii. 247.

⁴ This group of Judith, rescued from the Medici Palace in 1494 upon the fall of that family, was transported to the Place of the Signory with this inscription: *Exemplum salutis publicæ cives posuere.*

⁵ See on the campanile of S. M. del Fiore his famous Zuccone (bald), which is Barduccio Cherichini's portrait, coarse when viewed close, but splendid from the distance, for he had a perfect sense of the necessary conditions to observe to produce an effect. See also his other works of art, his Shepherd David in the Uffizi, St. George, St. Peter, St. Mark at the Or San Michele. We remember that once Michael Angelo said to the statue of St. Mark, "Why don't you speak to me?"

reliefs of the two pulpits of San Lorenzo executed from his designs.

Nothing strikes the imagination like boldness. Donatello easily became the favourite of the public and of the Medici, rather an echo than a guide of public feeling. It was under his direction that Cosimo began his collection of antique sculpture, the nucleus of the beautiful gallery that at his death was valued at 28,000 florins.¹ It was he also who ornamented his palaces and villas so successfully, that, although solicited from abroad, Donatello was obliged to refuse work outside of Florence. Recommended by Cosimo to his son Piero, he became his intimate friend. If he had few pupils, his method, even to his faults, prevailed during the century, and in the next century he had the glory of being followed by Michael Angelo, without appearing visibly his inferior. Upon a collection of the designs of these two men of genius Vincenzo Borghini wrote in Greek: "Either Donatello imitates Buonarroti, or Buonarroti imitates Donatello."²

These three very different initiators in their own time found a wise and clever successor, who possessed something of the merits of each while remaining their inferior: Michelozzo de Bartolommeo Michelozzi (1396?–1472). A disciple of Ghiberti,³ he associated his less powerful chisel with Donatello's,⁴ and ended by devoting himself to architecture, a vaster field of work, where his model was Brunelleschi. He spread the reform in that art in Umbria, in Lombardy, and even in Venice, whither he had followed the exiled Medici. Favours and honours were

¹ Fabroni, *Vita Cosmi*, Doc., p. 231. This document has been reprinted in Roscoe, App. 70, trad. ii. 470.

² Ἡ Δωρατὸς βοναρρότσει, ἢ βοναρρότὸς δωρατσει. See Baldinucci on Donatello, Dec. i. part 1, sec. 3, vol. iii. p. 73–83; Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, iii. 243–269, and trad. Jeanron, ii. 228; Crowe and Cavalcaselle, ii. 276–282; Rio, i. 322–335; Rumohr, ii. 243; Leo, ii. 212; Forster, iii. 65–82; Ranalli, p. 150–153; Runge, *Der Glockenthurm der Doms zu Florenz*, Berlin, 1857; H. Semper, *Donatello, seine Zeit und Schule (Quellenschriften zur Kunst*, vol. ix., Vienna, 1875).

³ Gaye, i. 117 sq.; Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, iii. 270, n. 2.

⁴ See his St. Matthew at Or San Michele, and his St. John the Baptist at the Uffizi.

showered on him much more than on the other three. Cosimo adopted his plans, not because they were more modest, but because they were more promptly executed: having given his order, the epicurean was anxious to enjoy his palaces and villas.¹

This constant preference was not misplaced. Michelozzo made a notable stride in the great art of architecture. At a time when public taste only relished an impression of strength in buildings, like the Pitti and Strozzi palaces in their foundation, he introduced into his the beautiful and varied arrangement of antique art; he set the orders one above the other without surrendering his individuality, without sacrificing the solidity of the whole, or the commodious distribution of the interior—quite a modern need.² While he had settled at least for some years the style of domestic architecture, he endeared himself to the clergy by building convents as comfortable as his houses and palaces,³ and he built them by order of the pagan Cosimo.⁴

This new or renewed art found at the same time its theorist. Leone Battista Alberti (1404–1472) wrote a treatise, *De re ædificatoria*, which circulated in manuscript during his lifetime and was printed after his death.⁵ Moreover, he preached by example as well as by precept; many of his works, still celebrated, have a delicacy and naïveté that give them an original stamp.⁶ But this Florentine, an adept in literature

¹ Machiavelli regards the Riccardi Palace, begun in 1430 and finished in 1440, as worthy of a great citizen, and the villas of Cafaggiolo, Careggi, Fiesole, Trebbio, as worthy of a king: “Una nella città di quello essere che a tanto cittadino si conveniva. . . . Tutti palagi non da privati cittadini, ma regii” (*Ist. Fior.*, l. vii. p. 103 B. Cf. Fabroni, *Vita Cosmi*, text, p. 152; Reumont, *Tav. Cron.*

² See the Tornabuoni Palace, the Corsi of to-day, as well as the Riccardi Palace.

³ The Library of San Giorgio in Venice is by Michelozzo, ordered by Cosimo during his exile, and in Florence the Noviciate of Santa Croce, San Miniato, and La Nunziata.

⁴ Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, iii. 270–286; Reumont, *Tav. Cron.*; Ranalli, p. 146–147; Rio, i. 316–319; Forster, iii. 32; Leo, ii. 214.

⁵ In 1485. This treatise has run into many other editions since. Cosimo Bartoli translated it in 1550, and had many imitators (Reumont, *Tav. Cron.*).

⁶ The Fountain of Trevi, the Ruccellai Palace, the choir and tribune of the Nunziata, San Andrea of Mantua, San Francesco of Rimini.

and science¹ as well as in art, worked little for Florence. If the gates were re-opened for him by the will of Cosimo, who in his triumph resolved to recall the enemies of the Albizzi, he was quickly obliged to seek a livelihood out of his own country, for the powers could not forget that he was the grandson of Cipriano Alberti, the citizen whose fierce independence had come into collision with the tyrannical oligarchy.² A good hound hunts by instinct, thought the chief of the Medici, and the disgrace of this pacific and universal genius reflects no honour upon him.³

Like Michelozzo in architecture, Luca della Robbia (1400–1482) might have continued in sculpture the great traditions of these three masters, have even competed with them, if, after having shown the vivacity and grace of youth in bronze,⁴ he had not preferred to become the head of a school by creating a new branch in art. In his career of invention he still adhered to Ghiberti, whose pictorial sculpture suggested to him the terra-cotta works that he coloured, as a sort of compromise between real sculpture and antique painting on enamel, and which he employed as a permanent decoration, a purpose they admirably fulfilled.⁵ This is only a secondary art; without touching upon the disputed question of polychromy, petrified earth preserved by a varnish from the blight of the atmosphere

¹ In common tongue. See his book, *Della Famiglia*, of which the third book has furnished the matter of the work of Pandolfini; in Latin, his comedy entitled *Philodoxios* (1450), and signed Lepidus Comicus, by which Alde Manuzio was taken in, who published it as of an ancient work (Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, iv. 52, n. 2, Life of L. B. Alberti).

² See our vol. vi. p. 18, 101, 107.

³ *Memorie e Documenti inediti per servire alla Vita letteraria di L. B. Alberti* (anonymous and without date); G. B. Niccolini, *Elogio di L. B. Alberti*, Flor., 1819; Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, iv. 52–66; Reumont, *Tav. Cron.*; Ranalli, p. 144; Capponi, ii. 168; Forster, iii. 33–39.

⁴ See at S. M. del Fiore the doors of the sacristy, on which he worked after Donatello, Michelozzo, and Maso de Bartolommeo (1464), and a choir of angels above the organ, of a rare perfection.

⁵ See his two works which surmount the doors of the two sacristies of S. M. del Fiore, his emblematic medallions on the exterior wall of Or San Michele, his crowning of the Virgin at the Church d'Ognissanti, and a Madonna at the Mercato Vecchio.

does not show delicacy of workmanship to advantage, though nothing is more suitable for mere ornamentation. The imitation of Nature almost deceives the eye, and it is wonderful to see how, under difficult conditions, the correct design of Luca, somewhat cold, like Ghiberti's, and his form and scientific modelling, like that of the Florentines generally, reach an expression so true and graceful and so little affected. In a word, he excels in the monumental style.

It was not he, but his school, that, by exaggerating his system, fell into the error of competition with painting. And yet, when his brothers Ottaviano and Agostino and his nephew Andrea (1437-1528) worked with him, it is often impossible to distinguish what share each of them contributed. Two of Andrea's sons went to France to create a line of disciples, amongst whom were Leonard Limosin, Pierre Courtois, and Bernard de Palissy. Though popular in the sixteenth century, this art was without doubt of an inferior order, but it held its place and deserves mention.¹

The painters hold a much higher place in the history of art. They were legion; through them we see to what an extent the study of Nature advanced through the study of the antique, and became, even to excess, the rule of a whole generation. This excess, that is to say, a contempt of selection, was then the only novelty. Landino and Alberti were already calling the Giottesque Stefano the monkey of Nature.² An old painter, of whom no one speaks now, marks the transition, like the forgotten link of a chain, which seems broken without being broken, for in Nature there are no breaks.

This painter was Giuliano of Arrigo, called Pesello (1367-1466). In 1390 he worked with Agnolo Gaddi upon the monument of Piero Farnese. In 1419 the designs of Brunel-

¹ Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, iii. 59-75; trad. Jeanron, ii. 54; Rumohr, ii. 292; Leo, ii. 577; Forster, iii. 82-90; Rio, i. 427; Ranalli, p. 159-161; Cavallucci and Molinier, *Les Della Robbia, leur Vie et leur Œuvre*, Paris, 1884.

² See our vol. v. p. 449, and n. 3.

leschi for the cupola of the cathedral were preferred to his ;¹ but in the following year he was named as substitute for his rival, in case the latter should die or give up his work. His name only appears in the book of painters in 1424, and he lived long enough to obtain the favour of the now powerful Cosimo.² In his work, and in that of his grandson Francesco Pesellino (1422-1457), who imitated him, traces are to be found of the innovations that younger and more talented men introduced by their side. Portraiture, which the taste of the day so readily tolerated in all paintings, was already seen in Peselli's work, a proof that the painter had substituted the imitation of Nature for the noble but less studied fantasies of the preceding age. Thus it was the Giottesques who were the first to produce in the fifteenth century, though modestly and without genius, the innovation which, inspired by genius and boldly conducted, was destined to transform art.³

The first great step after the Peselli was made by Masolino of Panicale (1383-1447). Truth to say, it was not without a sensible loss. Masolino neglected the great laws of composition followed by the Giottesques. Less varied than they, he did not, like them, go in for groups, but he was less hard and crude. To simple reality, the conquest of his predecessors, he added *chiaroscuro*, his own conquest, and a real revolution. He also introduced perspective and understanding of relief, movement, foreshortening, expression, and classical purity, which he learned from the model of Ghiberti,⁴ as well as from

¹ See Ces. Guasti, *La Cupola*, &c., p. 25-26.

² Cosimo advanced him money to marry one of his daughters. *Giornale Storico degli Archivi Toscani*, 1862, p. 31 ; Crowe, ii. 356.

³ Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, iv. 180-183 ; Crowe and Cavalcaselle, ii. 358, 359, 365. These two English authors, who wrote after the Milanese, Vasari's editors, correct the errors of this excellent edition on these painters which they carefully studied. Cf. Forster, iii. 135. On Pesellino, see Baldinucci, Dec. vi. part 2, sec. 3, 2, vol. iv. p. 29-31. We shall refer once for all to *L'Histoire des Peintres de toutes les Ecoles*, by Ch. Blanc, principally to the volume entitled *Ecole Florentine*.

⁴ Vasari (ed. Lem., in-12, iii. 135) calls Masolino the pupil of Ghiberti, but criticism contradicts this assertion to-day. See Milanese, ed. in-8 of his Vasari, ii. 264, n. 1.

the works he saw in Rome. We cannot say whether he was a colourist, as his colours are effaced;¹ but Starnina, his master in this respect, passed for the greatest colourist of the day;² and Parri Spinelli, his pupil, according to Vasari, excelled in this art.³ Masolino, as well, has a harmony of tone and a bold contrast of light and shade, in which he is the precursor of Leonardo, Giorgione, Caravaggio, and Titian.⁴

More than once already have we written the word perspective—which is the application of mathematics to art. It was the great interest of the hour, and the aim was to surpass the earlier artists. Brunelleschi had already taught the rudiments. Ghiberti introduced perspective into his bas-reliefs. Masolino did not despise it. An ardent zeal for progress sufficed to transform a simple “shop-boy” of Ghiberti’s into an initiator.⁵ He was called Paola of Dono, and surnamed Uccello because of his excellent animal and bird painting (1397–1475). He saw the reform of drawing in perspective, which for him, as well as for the Greeks, was the principal thing in art; he understood that it meant the exclusion of those fixed, expressionless, and glacial faces, those frail and inert limbs, those feet beating the void, to which hitherto art had been a slave. He was not a painter, but a man of science who painted. His contemporaries themselves were only half-satisfied with his works, and scrupled not to make him do them over again.⁶ His monochrome pictures were monotonous, and when he essayed polychromy, he painted blue

¹ The only works that we have of Masolino are of 1405.

² Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, iii. 135, n. 2. On Gherardo Starnina (1354–1408?) see Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, ii. 200–204.

³ “Non si può desiderar meglio, ed i colori suoi non hanno paragone” (Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, iii. 145). Cf. Ranalli, p. 163–164; Forster, iii. 141.

⁴ Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, iii. 135–143; Rosini, ii. 249–251; Ranalli, p. 163; Rio, i. 371; Crowe and Cavalcaselle, ii. 506; Forster, iii. 151.

⁵ In 1407. See Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, iii. 87, n. 1. His reply to his wife, begging him to rest, is well known: “If you knew how delightful perspective is!”

⁶ Thus his equestrian Hawkwood of S. M. del Fiore (1436), “quare non est pictus ut decet” (Gaye, i. 536; Vasari, ed. Lem., in-8, ii. 212, and n. 2). Uccello had promised to give this picture the appearance of an equestrian statue on a pedestal. The illusion did not appear complete.

landscapes and red towns.¹ Even his drawing, upon which all his care was concentrated, was wanting in correctness as in elegance and force of Nature. Nothing less Giottesque could be imagined.² His faults were overlooked. It was an intoxication to see perspective applied to the ground, figures and foreshortened forms, to see ditches, alleys, and the ridges of a ploughed field vanish in the distance, to measure the distance between two persons, and understand how small a man looks lying head backward. The day was over for symbols and hieroglyphics; form was demanded in support of ideas; the reproduction of Nature was wanted, instead of a false embellishment or travestie of life.³

Cosimo shared the exaggerated enthusiasm of his contemporaries. While an obscure merchant, Torino Baldese, was employing Uccello to decorate a public edifice, Santa Maria Novello, with a story from Genesis, he employed this same painter and his friend, Daniello or Dello, a decorator, to adorn the various chambers of a private building, his own palace.⁴ Of the two friends, perhaps Dello carried off the honours with the brush; but how far he is from sharing Uccello's place in the history of art! This was probably why he was drawn to Spain, where it has never been profitable to confine oneself.⁵

Uccello did a good deal by his apostolic zeal, but he was

¹ See his story of the Fathers of the Desert at San Miniato.

² See the cloisters of S. M. Novella.

³ Hence the taste for portraits. There is a little picture of Uccello in the Louvre, which represents him with Giotto, Brunelleschi, Donatello, Manetti, &c. It was bought in 1847 at the Stevens sale for 1467 frs. Vasari, ed. Lem., in-8, ii. 215, and n. p. 216.

⁴ Vasari speaks with admiration of the subjects of the animal and vegetable kingdom with which Uccello decorated Cosimo's palace (ed. Lem., in-12, iii. 91). Cosimo ordered of Dello an entire chamber, with moulded ceiling, framework, and cornices. On this painter, born in 1404, who lived still in 1455, see Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, iii. 46, 54, 91; Rosini, ii. 244; Ranalli, p. 119-121; Rio, i. 355.

⁵ On Uccello see Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, iii. 87-90; Baldinucci, Dec. ii. part 1, sec. 4, vol. iii. p. 122; Roscoe, c. 9, trans. vol. ii. p. 226; Rosini, ii. 247; Ranalli, p. 123; Crowe and Cavalcaselle, i. 519, ii. 285; Delaborde, i. 104; Taine, *Voyage en Italie*, ii. 137-140.

not a single meteor. Others after him followed in the same path, and through them oil-painting took root in Florence. The new process had been known as early as the fourteenth century, since Cennino Cennini mentions it in his treatise on painting, but was disputed until the end of the fifteenth century, as Ghirlandajo still preferred to paint in distemper, and with the white of eggs. Domenico of Venice and Andrea del Castagno remarked that oil is much better for reproducing Nature exactly, as well as for making works of art permanent, and by using it they spread the fashion upon the banks of the Arno.¹ Although a Venetian, Domenico may be classed with the Florentine school. His talent and his person were much admired by Cosimo.² As for Andrea del Castagno (1390-1457), called from his Mugello by Bernardo de' Medicis, he gained the heart and ducats of Cosimo by painting the chiefs of the defeated oligarchy hanging by their feet, whence his name, *Andrea degl' impiccati*—Andrew of the hanged.

For this party service he was designed by his matchless talent in faithfully representing the human face. His custom was to insert portraits everywhere. If he painted the apostles, Rinaldo des Albizzi, Puccio Pucci, Antonio des Vieri, called Farganaccio, a *sensale*, or broker in the art of change, who had played a rôle in Cosimo's captivity,³ and even himself under the mask of Judas Iscariot—not precisely a flattering portrait—were all recognised.⁴ The physiognomies he painted are rough and disagreeable, approaching caricature by their forcible grimace, irregular drawing, and inhumanly livid colouring. In this he resembles Pesselino, as he vies with Dona-

¹ It is to be hoped we shall hear no more of the fable of Andrea murdering Domenico, jealous of his secret of oil-painting, no longer a secret, Andrea having died four years before Domenico, as the brothers Milanese have proved in their last edition of Vasari, ed. Lem., in-8, ii. 688.

² Crowe and Cavalcaselle, ii. 313, 317; Rosini, iii. 123; Forster, iii. 145.

³ See on the real name of Farganaccio, Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, iv. 150; on his rôle, our vol. vi. p. 399.

⁴ Rio, i. 391.

tello in strength and with Uccello in perspective and boldness of foreshortening.¹

On the whole, he studied Nature, had style, and was head of a school—a school, it is true, already in its decadence, which abused realism, and brought it down lower than ever Uccello had done, which ignored the art of transforming reality into beauty by varying movement and physiognomy, by graceful curves and ideal proportions, which represented man so humped by muscles that Leonardo found him like a sack of nuts, but which at least showed that it understood the muscles, which Giotto ignored, and that it knew how to attach solid limbs to bodies solidly built.² Andrea del Castagno lived in a time when greater masters than he gave better lessons, but his are easier to follow; this is why Andrea del Verrocchio and the Pollajuoli, copied him after Alesso Baldovinetti, who, in his hard and crude realism, painted the tiniest mosses upon stones, and the various shades of green upon two sides of leaves, the large hands and feet of the peasants that he took for models. An inferior art, no doubt, but we cannot speak contemptuously of it, since Baldovinetti was the master of Ghirlandajo, who in turn taught Michael Angelo.³

Parallel with it, and as if by contrast rather than opposition, the old hieratic art, renewed from Byzantium, found renewed appreciation in the monasteries. The heads of religious orders liked to have painters near them to illuminate their choir books and missals, to decorate the vast and naked walls of their convents and churches. The monks tried their hand at the work, and the best remained devoted to it. These clois-

¹ Baldinucci and Lanzi pretend, the one that Andrea was a pupil, the other an imitator, of Masaccio. There is no other foundation for this assertion than the possibility of his having studied the Brancacci chapel, since he died after Masaccio, who was younger.

² On Andrea del Castagno see Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, iv. 139-151; Baldinucci, Dec. iii. part 1, sec. 5, vol. iii. p. 195-203; Forster, iii. 148.

³ Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, iv. 101-107; Baldinucci, Dec. iii. part 1, sec. 5, vol. iii. p. 185-189; Roscoe, c. 9, trans. vol. ii. p. 236; Rosini, iii. 16; Ranalli, p. 248; Rio, i. p. 424; Crowe and Cavalcaselle, ii. 372-374. It is curious enough that Rio (i. 401) wants to connect this realist with the mystic school.

tered illuminators and decorators incessantly reproduced the miniatures of the Middle Ages which they had under their eyes in their sacred manuscripts. The result was an awkward and naïve process, a clear and brilliant colouring. If by chance one of them had talent or genius, the miniature system was enlarged and made perfect, but was always recognisable. Though it ceased to be hideous, the art remained Byzantine.¹

Some see in it a new school, "the mystic," opposed to the "realistic or naturalist school." The mystics in painting are a mystification. They proposed, we are told, to represent the invisible, as if the object of painting was not the visible, as Poussin has said! However, there is no school without disciples grouped around a master, following his teachings and copying his models. In Florence we find ourselves among the "realists;" in Venice, Milan, Sienna, and in Umbria, among the "mystics," such as we have never seen, many of whom are anterior to their pretended masters. It was a matter of personal feeling or of trade. The "naturalists," when they received an order for a religious picture, could do it, only they didn't consider themselves obliged to paint their men hideous. Brunelleschi had even dared to paint a handsome Christ.² If a cloistered painter introduced beauty into the enlarged miniatures, there was no longer an abyss between the two traditions. This was done in Florence and elsewhere. The old Chelini represented at the Bigallo the Crusade preached in 1290 by Peter the Martyr against the Florentines.³ Lorenzo the Camaldule was a Giottesque miniaturist, except that he did not know how to compose.⁴ Gentile de Fabriano made a

¹ See Rumohr, ii. 310; Leo, ii. 579.

² It was Rio who in France was the glorifier of the mystic school. Jeanron and Leclanché, in the commentaries of their translation of Vasari, have violently opposed his doctrine. See vol. vii. p. 281-287.

³ Omitted by Vasari. Chelini was mentioned by Rumohr with exaggerated praises. Rio (i. 357-359) avers that that which is most interesting in his painting of Bigallo is the subject.

⁴ Lorenzo the Camaldule, of whom it is not known either when he was born or when he died, but who is first mentioned as a painter in 1410, recalls Agnola

name in his own country.¹ Guido de Fiesole (1387-1455), in religion Fra Giovanni, and immediately after his death, perhaps even before, Fra Angelico—Fra Beato Angelico—was ahead of them all by a hundred leagues.²

Born of an obscure dweller in the Mugello, apprenticed to art in the shadow of the cloister, by an assiduous contemplation of missals and illuminated manuscripts, and by the advice of a certain Father Giovanni, he hit upon his own style from the first day he held a brush. He only broadened it when the exodus of his order, upon Florence declaring for Alexander V. against Gregory XII., sent him to Foligno (1409), then to Cortona (1414), to the sanctuary of Assisi, in face of the frescoes of Stefano and Giotto. There he learned to make diptychs and tabernacles, without, however, giving to his figures any other than a touching and religious, if stiff and hieratic, expression, without anatomy or modelling. Why should he want to change, convinced as he was that God directed his brush? Michael Angelo described him as the painter of the elect of Dante's Paradise, which he must have visited with permission to choose his models; and, of course, he was less at home with sinners, who are sometimes monks, cardinals, and popes. In hell he is greatly the inferior of Luca Signorelli, of Rubens, and, above all, of the grand Buonarroti.³ Invariably Gaddi, Spinelli d'Arezzo. Any of his pictures at the Academy of Fine Arts or at the Uffizi might be attributed to Giotto or Taddeo Gaddi. See Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, ii. 209-217; Rosini, ii. 242; Rio, ii. 280; Crowe and Cavalcaselle, i. 551-553; Foster, iii. 137.

¹ Gentile de Fabriano, born about 1370, died about 1450. He was the master of Jacopo Bellini, and must have had some influence on the two sons of the latter, Giovanni and Gentile. Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, iv. 152-168; Rio, ii. 180; Ranalli, p. 169; Crowe and Cavalcaselle, iii. 96. Baldinucci (Dec. iv. part 1, sec. 6, vol. iii. p. 221) calls Gentile de Fabriano a disciple of Angelico, but he adds that he flourished in 1425.

² P. Domenico de Corella, Prior of S. M. Novella in 1483, wrote a heroic poem in which we read—

" Angelicus pictor quam finxerat ante, Johannes
Nomine, non Jotto, non Cimabove minor."

Thus he was commonly called Angelico thirty years after his death. See P. Marchese, *Memorie dei più insigni Artefeci Domenicani*, i. 199, n. A; Crowe and Cavalcaselle, i. 566, n. 2.

³ See his Last Judgment in the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence.

sweet, in his Massacre of the Innocents he even gives a sweet expression to the faces of the executioners. He lived in his own world, peopled with saints, resembling in nothing his perfidious and corrupt contemporaries.¹

But he returned to Fiesole (1418), and was soon established with his companions, the Dominicans, in the convent of San Marco, by Cosimo, who was anxious to win them over to him (1436); there, though he remained a miniaturist, he soon became Giottesque. Like all Giottesques, he is negligent and incorrect in drawing the extremities of the human body, and, like them, he easily covers vast spaces.² He gained light from Giotto and refined on Orcagna. This ascetic, who took up his brush in prayer and shed tears whenever he painted a Christ, nevertheless sought and found in Nature those lovely and living types which he corrected in transmitting. Thus he was balanced to a certain extent between the Giottesques, already belonging to the past, and the naturalists, who belonged to the present and the future. He recalls Masolino while remaining his superior. How could he be other, since he sustains comparison with the greatest names? If in the Vatican, Michael Angelo is crowned for strength and Raphael for form, Angelico is unrivalled in religious feeling. We can still admire him after admiring these two. The first Medici, who could not make this instructive comparison, at least had the merit, in spite of their taste for naturalism, of not misunderstanding the great idealist, and they protected him as they protected Andrea del Castagna.³

¹ Marchese, i. 224-226; Delaborde, i. 104-115; Rio, ii. 288-303; Ranalli, 167-169; Rumohr, ii. 257; Leo, ii. 212; Crowe, i. 573.

² See the panels of the Nunziata, which belong to the Academy of Fine Arts (Nos. 11-24), representing scenes from the life of Christ, and his beautiful paintings in the Chapter Hall of San Marco, &c.

³ Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, vi. 25-44; Baldinucci, Dec. ii. part 1, sec. 4, vol. iii. p. 89-101; Ranalli, p. 167-169; Rosini, ii. 253-258; Rio, ii. 288-304, 393; Delaborde, i. 104-117; Taine, *Voyage en Italie*, ii. 152; Crowe and Cavalcaselle, i. 573-579, 595; Rumohr, ii. 257; Leo, ii. 212; Foster, iii. 188-215; Marchese, i. 247; the same, *San Marco, Convento dei Padri Predicatori in Firenze*, with the life of Angelico, Flor., 1850; E. Breton, *Fra Angelico et ses fresques* (*Revue de l'Art Chrétien*, October 1859); Cartier, *Vie de Fra Angelico da Fiesole*, Paris, 1857.

If they were only realists, as some suggest, would they not have patronised the wonderful Masaccio, who was then the great renovator of art? On the contrary, they neglected him, although Masaccio, having heard of Cosimo's return to Florence, hastened thither from Rome;¹ although this provincial from San Giovanni in the Val d'Arno reformed art materially, as Cimabue and Giotto reformed it morally; although he placed technique as high as the ideal; although to achieve his aim, which was a return to Nature, he transformed and ameliorated the method. To speak correctly, he was not a reformer but a collector; he appropriated the conquests of his predecessors; he took melancholy tenderness from Masolino; the rare and exquisite power of representing things as they commonly, not exceptionally are, from Brunelleschi, and from Uccello the laws of perspective. But as he was a collector of genius, he made of these various materials a harmonious whole, and advancing on his predecessors, he achieved a definite progress. His perspective skilfully combines lines with the play of light, and gives to foreshortened figures or colonnades lost in the distance a wonderful distinction. His figures are bathed in an atmosphere that Uccello did not understand before him, and that Mantegna after him could not render. Into art, already less stiff and more familiar than in the fourteenth century, he introduced a taste for movement and life, without ceasing to belong to the past; he followed Giottino, that is, Giotto's principles. Giottesque in the transparency of his colouring as in his poor understanding of the details of form, he excels disciples and master alike in a happy combination of light and shade, in a judicious choice among the models which Nature offers, and in a delicate suppression or subordination of all that is accessory, also in the means he discovered to indicate proportions, distances, and gradation of planes, near or distant, and behind the colours.

¹ "Ut Cosmum ab exilio revocatum audivit, Roma Florentiam rediit" (Fabroni, *Vita Cosmi*, text, p. 156). Vasari has written that Masaccio was "molto aiutato e favorito" of Cosimo (ed. Lem., in-12, iii. 158), but that is no longer admitted to-day. See Rio, i. 379.

of the surface, depth and plenitude, flesh and bones. A designer of lofty style and a magical colourist, he had the two supreme qualities of the painter. He continued in Giotto's path with Donatello's energy and audacity, but without his exaggeration; he himself found his successors in Andrea del Sarto and Correggio. In making the chain solid after Giotto and Orcagna, Masaccio certainly accomplished most. Other men of genius came after, undoubtedly greater than he, but it is as certain that the advancement was more marked from Giotto to Masaccio than from Masaccio to Raphael. From Giotto came the Renaissance of painting, with Masaccio its most decided step towards perfection. The latter was no greater than the former, but he did more; just as the man of whom Pascal writes, who, perched on the shoulders of a taller man, could see farther.¹

It has often been said that Masaccio remained unappreciated for half a century. Nothing is less true, except so far as Cosimo is concerned. Leone Battista Alberti places this astonishing genius on a par with Brunelleschi, Ghiberti, Donatello, and Luca della Robbia.² When the chapel of the Brancacci in the church of the Carmine was opened, which was decorated chiefly by him, the sensation was immense; Angelico's frescoes were forgotten, and Angelico himself, with the candour of a noble nature, was carried away with the torrent, and became a member of his fortunate rival's school—fortunate, if a man can be called so who dies in the middle of his glory at the age of twenty-six—and bringing from this study into his new works more vivacity, independence, and grandeur. However, the injustice of this infatuation did not last long. Vasari, the first to speak in the name of posterity, very soon

¹ Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, iii. 159-191; Baldinucci, Dec. iii. part 1, sec. 5, vol. iii. p. 149; Ranalli, p. 164-168, 268-269; Crowe and Cavalcaselle, i. 519-549; Jeanron et Leclanché, i. 491, ii. 137-142; Rio, i. 374; Delaborde, i. 96; Taine, *Philosophie de l'Art*, i. 16-25; *Voy. en Italie*, ii. 136, 142-146; Forster, iii. 151-188.

² *Traité de la Peinture*. Rio (i. 375) recognises it, though he is one of those who accuse Masaccio of misleading art by his naturalism.

gave his rightful place to this monk, who equalled Giotto and surpassed Masaccio in grace and elegance, as well as in the exalted expression of religious feeling. Both followers of Giotto, each was superior to the Giottesques in inspiration as in workmanship; if they could be mixed together, Giotto would be the result, as we imagine he would have been had he lived in the fifteenth century. But there was this difference between them, which belongs to Florentine history, that Angelico had no disciples except those in Umbria, who occupy a small place in the history of art, and whose works have even disappeared,¹ while all the good painters who followed, and whose talent grew and spread throughout Florence, proceeded from Masaccio, and came from his memorable chapel, the grandest monument of Italian painting until the Stanze of Raphael, the masterpieces which introduced definitely into religious art the sentiment of the true and the human.²

Assuredly Filippo Lippi (1406?–1469) was not Masaccio's disciple,³ and as certainly was he Angelico's, who was at least his first model;⁴ but having subsequently abandoned him,⁵ like many others, he was so quickly mastered by the new method that it was said the soul of Masaccio had entered the body of Fra Filippo.⁶ This unfrocked Carmelite did less for the progress of art than the Peselli, Uccello, Domenico of Venice, and Andrea del Castagna, but he avoided the vulgarities

¹ For example, Zanobi Strozzi, Domenico de Michelino.

² See Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, iii. 162; Rio, ii. 132; Delaborde, i. 119, 124; Ranalli, p. 167–169; Crowe and Cavalcaselle, i. 564, 568.

³ Fra Filippo Lippi appeared only in 1420 as painter in the book of the Carmine, where he was monk, and in 1432 he disappeared from that book, doubtless because of his adventures. If many of these are disputed (see the proofs in Vasari, ed. Lem., in-8, ii. 615, n. 1; Crowe and Cavalcaselle, ii. 323), we cannot deny that at the age of fifty he carried off the novice Lucrezia Buti (Vasari, ed. Lem., in-8, ii. 637, and at the end of the commentary of the Milanese).

⁴ His Nativity in the Academy of Fine Arts, No. 26, gallery of small pictures, has been attributed to Angelico. See Rio, i. 383.

⁵ Crowe and Cavalcaselle (ii. 335) attributed to Peselli the Nativity which in the Museum of the Louvre is supposed to be a Lippi. This marks the transition of Lippi to his second style.

⁶ Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, iv. 116.

of the early realists. He came after Masaccio for perfect distribution and arrangement; he supplied what is wanting in movement, life, grace, charm of colouring, sensibility, and at times even greatness, for he was never freer than upon immense frescoes that demanded action.¹ He enlarged Masaccio's method. For architectural background and the play of scientific perspective, he substituted a background of landscape, smiling rustic scenes, perhaps a little too finished, though varied, but always so beautiful that we forget the figures in the foreground, and only see in him the first landscape-painter of the Italian school, the only one who rivalled the Flemish. He pleases the eye and the mind so much, that, not to exaggerate his merit,² we must say he had less trouble in improving an already excellent art than Masaccio had in reforming one still defective.³

It is a singular feature in the career of this monk, so ardent in love, so abused for his life, that he never painted the carnival scenes and rustic amusements which the art of the day borrowed, to please the public, from Boccaccio's tales and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. His subjects were always religious, and he painted more than all the Florentine painters together in convents and churches, in the houses of noblemen and burghers, in Florence and Tuscany, in Rome and Padua. This was because his cloisteral life procured him countless commissions, which increased with the success of his first works; a manifest proof that the paganism of the Renaissance did not exclude a taste for religious pictures. Upon this subject the Medici followed the general feeling. Cosimo used to lock Lippi up to force him to work.⁴

¹ See his admirable works at Prato and the tribune of the Cathedral of Spoleto.

² This merit has, however, no one knows why, been unrecognised by Vasari and Lanzi.

³ Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, iv. 114-130; trad. Jeanron, iv. 39-41; Baldinucci, Dec. iv. part 1, sec. 6, vol. iii. p. 212-220; Roscoe, c. 9, trans. vol. ii. p. 227; Rosini, iii. 8, 9; Ranalli, p. 167; Rio, i. 383-388; Rumohr, ii. 269; Leo, ii. 213; Foster, iii. 215.

⁴ It is known that Lippi, in a thirst for liberty and love, escaped by the window at the peril of his life, and that Cosimo resolved not to restrain him longer. See Vassari, *loc. cit.*

As violence succeeds ill with a fiery and independent character, and Fra Filippo, flying from creditors and the plague, had retired to Prato, painters became rare after the deaths of Pesellino and Andrea del Castagno, and Cosimo, after 1457, showered all his favours¹ upon Benozzo Gozzoli (1424-1485?). Following in the footsteps of Lippi, whom he did not equal, Gozzoli was a disciple of the two masters of the times, Angelico and Masaccio. Giottesque in intention at the start,² he was only able to paint in the style of the miniaturists. In Rome he followed the suave Dominican of Fiesole, and his fertile imagination, without enabling him to equal his great master, was prodigal of details in a style less original than brilliant, which constituted him the educator of Umbria. After his masterpiece of Montefalco, he went with the tide, seeing that if he meant to grow rich by his trade he must burn incense before the god of the hour. As a practical man, he became a realist, and aimed at charm and life. How many walls were there to decorate in the palace of the Medici! As a sceptic, he worked either in the religious or profane style. But it was through his great masterpiece in the Campo Santo of Pisa, in which he reproduced the true and invented an artistic composition, that Benozzo Gozzoli became, under Lorenzo, a great master.³

Thus we reach the limit of the two periods, for Piero the Gouty, who ruled Florence for such a short time, does not

¹ His real name was Benozzo de Lese de Sandro. Gozzoli was a surname. The brothers Milanese (Vas., Lem., in-12, iv. 184, n. 1) do not say if that surname has a sense. *Gozzo*, in Italian, means throat or goitre.

² In the hexagonal choir of Montefalco, where Benozzo placed his masterpiece (1452), was the portrait of Giotto beside those of Dante and Petrarch, with this inscription: *Pictorum eximius lottus fundamentum et lux*. See Crowe and Cavalcaselle, ii. 501.

³ See the chapel of the Palace Riccardi and the twenty-four compartments of the Campo Santo de Pisa, which represent the history of the creation. In the *Burning of Sodom* he worked without models. This immense work was done in two years. Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, iv. 184-203; Baldinucci, Dec. iii. part 1, sec. 5, vol. iii. p. 191-194; Ranalli, p. 247, 248; Rio, ii. 322, 329, 333; Rumohr, ii. 257; Foster, iii. 275; Crowe and Cavalcaselle (ii. 498, 503) are too severe upon Benozzo Gozzoli.

count, and he should rather be joined to his father than to his son. Like Cosimo, he was a Mæcenas at the lowest price, and we may laugh at his flatterers when they describe his liberalities as a "fruitful dew." He filled his garden with antique statues, and upon the excuse of his disease did not look at the works he had ordered, and criticised them without having seen them, to prepare himself for Rabelais' quarter of an hour. He let Benozzo Gozzoli nearly die of hunger; he only paid him on account as if it were an alms. If Benozzo, finding his work sufficiently advanced, asked forty florins for his winter provisions, he received no reply. He complained as a famished man, and Piero ended by placing ten florins in his outstretched hand.¹ After having endured four years of misery, and wanting work in Florence (1461-1465), he went to San Gimignano in search of it, and afterwards to Pisa (1468).² The same happened to Bernardo Gamberelli de Rossellino (1409-1471), and his brother Antonio (1427-1490),³ who had to wait so long for a meagre salary from Cosimo and Ottaviano de' Medicis, that they were reduced to despair.⁴ This niggardliness was the less explicable because it was impolitic, painters being then so few.

We must renounce this secular legend of the field of art being fertilised by the dew shed upon it by one man or one family. Cosimo de' Medicis had rare good fortune. In his time, and under his rule, capricious chance united at Florence talents as numerous as they were diverse—the universal Brunelleschi, the polished and elegant Ghiberti, the rough but powerful Donatello, the suave Angelico, the masculine Masaccio. In the task of regenerating art by the search for truth and the effect of the beautiful, begun by Giotto and continued but compromised by the Giottesques, these men of incomparable genius accomplished the essential, which Benvenuto Cellini sums up

¹ Gaye, i. 191-194.

² Rio, ii. 333.

³ On these two painters, see Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, iv. 217-226.

⁴ The document in Gaye, i. 188. Cf. Rio, i. 451.

in a word somewhat absolute but worth remembering, namely, that the art of drawing consists in the power to draw a nude man or a nude woman with a masterly hand. Only, Cosimo lived long enough to see the collapse of the admirable talent which flourished upon the banks of the Arno, and soon spread throughout Italy, and to feel the void left by it. It is true his grandson saw a new harvest, but as inferior to that which preceded it, as it was to that which followed it.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

PIERO DE' MEDICIS.

1464-1469.

Piero's rule objected to on principle—Actual resignation—Adhesion of the princes—Sforza's reticence—Piero puts his affairs into order—Numerous failures—Doubts of Piero's solidity and growing opposition—Luca Pitti, Angelo Acciajuoli, Dietisalvi Neroni, chiefs of the discontented party—Niccolò Soderini, the active head—Recall of the exiles deferred—Victory of Luca Pitti in the advice and re-establishment of lot-drawing (September 16, 1465)—Niccolò Soderini, Gonfalonier of Justice (November 1)—His vague and futile projects for reform—Death of Sforza (March 8, 1466)—Opposition of the councils to the alliance with Galeaz Maria—Conspiracy hatched outside by Dietisalvi—Failure of the plot (August 28)—Defection of Luca Pitti—Demonstration of the Duke of Modena in favour of the malcontents—Meeting of parliament (September 2)—Dismay and flight of the principal conspirators—Their condemnation (September 11)—Other severities—Luca Pitti spared—Return to a clement policy (September 15)—The defeated leaders in exile—Their plots—Their captain, Bartolommeo Colleoni—Battle of the Mulinella (July 23)—General desire for peace—Negotiations prevented by Paul II.—Peace concluded (May 26, 1468)—Fresh severities—Piero prepares his son Lorenzo to succeed him—Death of Piero (December 2, 1469).

COSIMO'S death must have been the signal for a crisis in that Florence, which was concentrated in him. He had been desired, accepted, sustained, because in wealth, talent, and prudence he was unequalled; but a good many objections were raised against his son. The first was one of principle; the town which preserved and cherished the illusion of her freedom could not unconcernedly witness the son assume his father's place by inheritance. If Piero had equalled Cosimo, perhaps they would have shut their eyes to the scandal; but he showed no greatness of mind, and he was never known to perform a brilliant action. He was reputed

a miser, haughty, and inexperienced; besides, at forty-six he was bent by the constitutional miseries that had crippled his father's old age; he never left his bed or his couch; he lived as much as possible in the fields and the fresh air. Upon no point was comparison favourable to him. As Comines has written, "L'auctorité de ses prédécesseurs nuisoit à Pierre de' Médicis."¹

Unfortunately, whatever La Boëtie may say, the master who is not supported must fall. If he has been well established, and the people are weary of subjection, he must be overthrown by a serious effort, which is superfluous when it is only a question of changing a yoke. That an effort was necessary upon Cosimo's death is shown by the root his power had taken, and the growing subjection of the Florentines. It was only later that they felt that by leaving Piero in his inherited greatness they condemned themselves to a slavery without remedy.²

In the beginning nothing seemed to have changed; ³ exile and ruin had reduced their enemies to impotence; they needed time to revive. As for friends, they obtained the sole benefit of the principle of heredity which it would have been audacious to proclaim. Everywhere in Italy and abroad, the succession from father to son, wherein Florence resembled the other States, was looked upon as natural. The king of France, the eternal ally of the Republic, but a friend of the Medici, counted upon the agreement of Piero and Sforza to "plunge the Venetians back into the water."⁴ The lords of Piombino and Faenza, the Duke of Modena, the Marquis of Mantua, the Malatesti, and all the principalities were prodigal of protesta-

¹ Comines, l. vii. cap. vii. vol. ii. p. 338.

² Jacopo Pitti, *Istoria Fiorentina*, l. i. in *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser. i. 19. That author (1519-1589) was nephew to Buonaccorso Pitti, from whose chronicle we have often quoted. See Preface by M. Polidori, p. xx. xxi.

³ "Da poi morì, le cose si passano dolcemente; e chi era grande, mi pare che rimanga" (Letter of Bonsi, September 15, 1464, in *Lettere di una Gentildonna*, p. 327).

⁴ Francesco Nori to Piero, Chambery, March 30, 1465, in Buser, Appendix, p. 431.

tions of friendship.¹ Pope Pius II. declared that having always found a father in Cosimo, he would look upon Piero as a brother, towards whom he would act in everything as if they were born of the same body.²

These protestations and flattering proposals intoxicated Cosimo's gouty heir. Pius II. died August 15, 1464. He spoke indifferently of the chances of election, and with disdain of the Holy See. "Faith," he said, "has greatly declined since Martin V., through the pomp and license of the popes and their court; it will quite be lost with their consideration if matters are not improved."³ Paul II., elected within a fortnight (August 30), was a Venetian, and a possible enemy of the Medici.⁴ If he were displeased with them, he showed no disquietude;⁵ the new pope was profuse in protestations.⁶ But there was one black spot on the horizon; the faithful Sforza, for the moment deprived of his ducats, and uncertain of Piero's stability, held himself in sulky and prudent reserve. "Either your lord lives no longer," Piero said to Nicodemo, "or he has forgotten his own affairs and ours. Does he not remember that we can do him much good? Is he quite indifferent to us? or has anything strange been reported to him? For us there is but one God in heaven, and on earth but His Sublimity."⁷ In spite of these abject protestations, Nicodemo, who was a close observer of facts, did not press his master to change

¹ Nicod. to Sforza, September 7, 1464, Orig., 1590, f. 391.

² Proposals reported by Giovanni Tornabuoni, "chief of the Medicis' bank," in a letter to Piero, and by Nicodemo to Sforza, August 11, 1464, Orig., 1590, f. 342.

³ Nicod. to Sforza, August 23, 1464, Orig., 1590, f. 361. The faith was lost much more by violence. Simoneto de Camerino, of the Hermit Brothers of St. Augustine, wrote to Sforza, "Come el focho l'auro, cussi la inquisition purifica lo homo" (Padua, October 15, 1464, *ibid.*, f. 450).

⁴ Pietro Barbo, Bishop of Cervia, Cardinal of St. Mark, Pope under the name of Paul II. See the details of his election in Sismondi, vi. 410 (November 16, 1464).

⁵ "Et non dubito che la brigata qui ne restarà di mala voglia. Io non me ne voglio amazare" (Nicod. to Sforza, August 31, 1464, *ibid.*, f. 373).

⁶ Nicod. to Sforza, September 7, 1464, *ibid.*, f. 391.

⁷ "Come alias me havia decto, vole uno Dio in celo, et in terra vostra sublimata" (Nicod. to Sforza, December 15, 1464, *ibid.*, f. 530).

his attitude, for he wrote him, "These people have served you more in appearance than in reality."¹ Black ingratitude surely; but who is grateful to an instrument, especially when it appears to withhold its services?

Such was the case. Following his father's and uncle's example, Piero, at his grandfather's death, had ordered his associates and agents, and all employed in his numerous offices, not to traffic until the following 25th of March, so as to give him time to see "in how many feet of water he was standing."² He wished to look into his affairs; establish the difficult balances of his wealth which was so widely distributed, administered by so many hands, and embarrassed by so many expenses and liberalities. And this was quite natural; but in following his miserly impulse and the advice of Dietisalvi Neroni, and speaking of gathering in the returns, he went beyond the limits. Cosimo never claimed any reimbursement. His debtors slept in the pleasant consciousness that their debts were forgotten. Hence the discontent of the awakening at home and abroad—a great perturbation in business, and innumerable failures in Florence, Venice, Avignon, and everywhere.³ Such a financial crisis had not been known since 1339.⁴ Piero asserted that he was ready to assist the bankrupts,⁵ but it would have been wiser not to have made them bankrupt.

There were scandals too. One of the most compromised of the bankrupts, a certain Lorenzo Larioni, who failed for 160,000 florins,⁶ conceived the ingenious idea of making the author of his ruin settle his affairs. His creditors obtained

¹ Nicod. to Sforza, September 7, 1464, *ibid.*, f. 391.

² Nicod. to Sforza, August 16, 1464, *ibid.*, f. 349.

³ Cron. Bol., xviii. 761; Machiavelli, vii. 106; M. Bruto, l. ii., in Burmann, vol. viii. part 1, p. 28. Machiavelli does not hesitate to see in the claims made by Piero the cause of the failures. The enumeration may be found in Alam. Rinuccini, p. 94.

⁴ Letter of Angelo Acciajuoli, December 22, 1464, in *Lettere di una Gentild.*, p. 350.

⁵ "Dato qualche buono assesto a questi falliti" (Nicod. to Sforza, December 15, 1464, Orig., 1590, f. 530).

⁶ Alam. Rinuccini, p. 95.

not more than a few halfpence in the pound, and the bankrupt came out of the matter richer than he had been for ten years, but at the expense of his honour.¹ Another, Giovan Francesco Strozzi, an exile, and son of Palla Strozzi, who had been so harshly treated, though he deserved a better fate, brought his rancour and political passion to bear upon the payment of his debts. Having indemnified such of his creditors as were not his compatriots, he invited the Florentines to his table, feasted them, and displayed jewels, pearls, and silver, saying afterwards, "I will not retrench any of this to pay you."³

Through his own fault Piero had made it impossible for him to ask his dissatisfied people for money.⁴ He had become so unpopular that nobody dared advise him to seek, as his father had done, the eminent post of Gonfalonier of Justice.⁵ Doubts increased about the stability of his power. One of the intriguers of the time, Angelo Acciajuoli, said, "The poor want bread, the rich want brains, the wise want wisdom."⁶ Riding with Nicodemo, he said, "This land is spoiled; it cannot last." Nicodemo thought the contrary,⁷ without certainty, however; for we read in one of his despatches to Sforza, "Piero will not fall if you support him."⁸ But the question was, would Sforza

¹ Letter from Alessandra Macinghi, No. 41, *Lettere di una Gentild.*, p. 358.

² See the Life of Palla Strozzi, by Vespasiano, in *Spicil. Rom.*, vol. i., and in *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., vol. iv. p. 362.

³ Letter from Bernardo Salviati to Filippo Strozzi, March 30, 1465, in *Lettere di una Gentild.*, p. 351.

⁴ "Molti de questi principali de lo stato hano rasonato meco che quantum che questa città stia meglio che may, tamen quando questi che governano cercassero de metter questo popolo in spesa, se metteriano a pericolo de irritarsi el popolo contra, ex consequenti de perdere lo stato" (Nicod. to Sforza, August 31, 1464, Orig., 1590, f. 374).

⁵ They advised Piero to become Gonfalonier in January 1465 (he was not that then, nor since). Nicodemo did not urge him too much: "Non gli ne fo gran calcha, perhoche cognosco anche del amaro, et che giovaria più a la reputatione de fora che ad quella de qui, che è l'opposito del bisogno suo" (December 21, 1464, Orig., 1590, f. 538).

⁶ Letter to Fil. Strozzi, December 22, 1464, in *Lettere di una Gentild.*, p. 350.

⁷ "Questa terra se guasta et che non durarà, &c. Io credo l'opposito" (Nicod. to Sforza, August 21, 1464, Orig., 1590, f. 354).

⁸ "Nè po perire finchè V. Cels. el risguarda cum gli oohii pari" (December 21, 1464, *ibid.*, f. 538). But the doubt still remained four months later.

support him, knowing him to be dishonest, and in no way a slave to his word?¹ and would Piero be able to defend himself against his friends, who regarded him as a good-natured person?²—a confused assortment of presumptuous and ambitious men, who recognised in him neither the authority nor reputation nor sense of his father, and dragged him down to suit their views, in order that they themselves should rise.³

Assuredly less dangerous were his enemies, a party whose numbers daily diminished, who had ill endured the ~~father's~~ yoke, and felt themselves superior to the son in age, health, services, and talent. Lacking frankness, like everybody in their time, they did not openly attack him; they masked their intention behind a time-serving friendship, but were ready to lead the chorus in an underhand opposition.

The principal was Luca Pitti. For a long time reduced to the level of a useful instrument, he privately aspired, thanks to his large fortune, even in Cosimo's lifetime, to play a leading part. How much greater reason had he not to flatter himself with the hope of relegating Piero to a second rank! In the beginning he appeared to act with him "as one and the same person;" but no one was duped by him; he was suspected of "acting the courtesan," and of seeking partisans everywhere.⁴ From that time there were two factions in Florence, the one *il poggio* or *hillock*, because Luca had built his palace upon

¹ "Io dixi . . . che havesse advertencia quando me faceva scrivere a V. Subl. ch'io non scrivessi una cosa, poy ne fosse un'altra, che seria toglier credito principalmente a luy poy ad me, et che in questo haveva a benedicere la memoria del padre, che may me havia facto scrivere cosa che poy non l'havesse observata" (Nicod. to Sforza, February 4, 1465, Orig., 1591, f. 16).

² "Per respecto a la bontà del M^{co} Piero" (Nicod. to Galeaz Maria, September 5, 1466, *ibid.*, f. 369). Example: the affair of two coiners. The one is a Jew, and they burn him; the other found more mercy (Nicod. to Sforza, December 29, 1465, *ibid.*, p. 228). We may believe that no one was shocked by so slight a matter. Cf. on Piero, Reumont, *Lor. de' Med.*, l. ii. cap. i. vol. i. p. 195-209.

³ Nicod. to Sforza, September 3, 1465, *ibid.*, f. 143.

⁴ "Piero e M. Luca sono una medesima cosa . . . M. Luca puttaneggia, ma con Piero si strigne; questa è vangelo" (Lettre de Lor. Strozzi, February 14, 1465, in *Lettere di una Gentild.*, p. 382).

the hill of San Giorgio; the other the plain, by opposition, that is to say, Piero and his friends.¹

Less wealthy than these two rivals, Angelo Acciajuoli was more capable, and yet not a genius. Cosimo's intimate friend, and an ally of the family,² he had been flung by Cosimo's exile into a life of adventure. Relegated to Cephalonia, and falling on his way into the power of the Turks, he escaped almost at once from them, in 1434, and shared the triumphs of return. His distinguished manners marking him out for an ambassador, he was sent on most important missions to Venice and France, where he represented the Duke of Milan as well as the Florentine Signory.³ Louis XI.⁴ pronounced him light and loquacious, but he was nevertheless a man of influence and well esteemed, who preferred the life of courts to life in his own country.⁵ There were various reasons why he became a secret enemy. One of the Medici had been preferred to his son for the archbishopric of Pisa, and the bishopric of Arezzo was an insufficient compensation.⁶ Cosimo had not lent himself to the proposal of an alliance between the two families,⁷ and called upon to arbitrate in a domestic difference, he had pronounced between another of Acciajuoli's sons and his daughter-in-law, who had quarrelled, by ordering the restitution of

¹ Nerli. l. iii. p. 50; Machiavelli, vii. 106 B; Ammirato, xxiii. 93; Jacopo Amanati, *Rerum tempore suo gestarum commentarii*; Reumont, *Lor. de' Med.*, l. ii. cap. ii. vol. i. p. 231. Divisions in the two parties appear in the letters of Angelo, Dietisalvi, &c., published by Fabroni, *Vita Laur.*, Doc., p. 28-38.

² Laudomia, Angelo's sister, married our Pier Francesco de' Medicis, Cosimo's nephew and son of his brother Lorenzo. See in Desjardins, i. 55, a notice on Ang. Acciajuoli.

³ See *passim* the despatches of Nicodemo. That of May 3, 1453, notably shows that Angelo was one of the principal friends of Cosimo (Orig., 1586, f. 203).

⁴ "Angelo Acciajuoli del quale però non prendeva troppo admiratione per la solita legierezza e volubilità quale dice sempre cognobbe in lui" (Panigarola à Galeaz Maria, October 8, 1466, in Buser, Append., p. 434).

⁵ Alam. Rinuccini, ann. 1466, p. 104.

⁶ See on this Filippo Medici a notice of M. Desjardins (i. 102), who confuses between the Archbishop and the Bishop, which is evident by what he says at the end of this notice and on p. 57.

⁷ Desjardins, i. 57.

her splendid dowry.¹ Enmities have been excited for less cause.

Like Angelo Acciajuoli, Dietisalvi Neroni had been one of Cosimo's great friends :² even on his deathbed Cosimo recommended his son to follow the advice of so far-seeing a man, and Piero took him as a secretary.³ We know less the hidden motives that drove him to hostility, and since nobody knows them, he is held up as a champion of freedom, in spite of a character unfitted to carry away the multitude. It is said that twice, while he was Gonfalonier of Justice, he attempted to restore liberty.⁴ But his contemporary Nerli quite understood that this bye-word was then nothing but a cover of ambition.⁵ Was Dietisalvi sincere in giving Piero economical advice, fit only to ruin him in the estimation of those he ruined? We may doubt it, since he joined Pitti, his inferior, and soon acknowledged him as chief. By his rash ardour, his great riches, his numerous adherents, as well as by his age and mediocrity, Luca Pitti was a desirable chief, easy to overthrow, according to all appearance, when he had drawn the chestnuts out of the fire.

But at his age was he fit to be the figure-head of the movement? The malcontents had a better chief at hand. A stranger to fear, quick in word and action rather than suited for the council, Niccolò Soderini was popular; he had ever upon his tongue words of justice and equity. Gonfalonier of Justice, he had wedded action to speech by reducing the tax on wine to fourteen pence!⁶ By his faults, as by his qualities, he resembled Giano della Bella.⁷ If he had succeeded in overthrowing Piero to the profit of Luca, whose adherent

¹ Machiavelli, vi. 106; M. Bruto, l. ii., in Burmann, vol. viii. part 1, p. 32.

² See the despatch from Nicodemo, May 3, 1453, Orig., 1586, f. 203.

³ Machiavelli, vii. 106 A; Ammirato, xxiii. 93.

⁴ In September 1449 and May 1454. See Alam. Rinuccini, ann. 1466, p. 104.

⁵ "Ricoprendosi col mantello della libertà, sotto il quale hanno usato di ricoprire la loro ambizione tutti quelli . . . hanno gridato questo nome" (Nerli, l. iii. p. 50).

⁶ Luca Landucci, *Diario*, p. 5. Luca adds: "Fu benedetto dal popolo."

⁷ Alam. Rinuccini, p. 104; *Comment. Jacobi card. Papiensis*, after *Pii II. com-*

he was,¹ and at whose house the conferences were held,² perhaps this short-sighted individual would have innocently believed that he restored liberty. He was of the infinitely small number of those who in the past wanted to go beyond the despotic Albizzi. His good intentions were unquestionable, his judgment alone was doubtful. He should have known that his generous and disinterested aspirations were not shared by the ambitious schemers with whom he associated.

The beginning of the task was the common work of the party. It was only a question of cutting the ground from under Piero's feet, and of depriving him at home and abroad of all support; the Duke of Milan's especially,³ and even the new Pope's, whom they warned not to place confidence in Cosimo's son.⁴ Then it was necessary to watch for an opportunity to push Luca Pitti into the exalted position of Gonfalonier, to reconstruct the bourses, according to the traditional tactics, and also to renew the alliance with Venice, which had been broken by the Medici.⁵

Piero's policy was to treat his enemies as they wanted to treat him.⁶ He was satisfied with striking a few as an

ment., p. 381; Machiavelli, vii. 108 A; Ammirato, xxiii. 94; M. Bruto, l. iii., in Burmann, vol. viii. part I, p. 51.

¹ Ammirato, xxiii. 94.

² "Fatto capo di questa parte M. Luca Pitti, si facevano nelle sue case tutti quanti i consigli" (J. Pitti, l. i., *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., i. 20). Jacopo Pitti is duped by the words: "Convenerò molti gelosi della libertà della patria con costoro, quantunque e' detestassero l'usata da loro tirannia; ma pero giudicavano ottimo cosa servirsi di quella potenza per la depressione de' Medici." But from this text it is seen at least that the opposition was formed by two currents.

³ "Da poco in qua instigati da M. Dietisalvi se son conjurati contro de lui, sopra tucto de meterlo in vostra disgracia et de questo popolo: in la vostra cum metervi a vedere chel non po quel che credete, et che se havete a reputarlo como havete facto el patre et luy, ve perderete l'universale de la città; ma che quando el lassiate ridurre al pare del altri o più basso, venite ad essere libero del debito havete cum luy et che de loro ve porete altramente aiutare che de luy" (Nicod. to Sforza, September 14, 1465, Orig., 1591, f. 151, and in Buser, Append., p. 432).

⁴ "Alcuni cittadini de qui gli dicono (to the Pope) et mandano a dire che no se fidi de esso Piero" (Nicod. to Sforza, December 15, 1464, Orig., 1590, f. 530).

⁵ Nicod. to Sforza, *ibid.*

⁶ "Dicono che Piero l'ha facto perché M. Luca el volia fare" (*Ibid.*).

example,¹ because their courage had become so weakened. In awaiting a favourable hour, he denounced those he presumed to be chiefs of the conspiracy: Luca Pitti, a mediocre personage, corrupted every department of the State; he filled his house with the exiled, the condemned, and the guilty; under the handsome appearance of liberality and courtesy, he robbed both the public and private individuals. He confounded things human and divine, and neither prayed to God nor the saints.² Whether truth or calumny, these reports turned the public against Luca, and, by a rebound, inclined it towards Piero, whom they believed less dangerous,³ and who entertained largely.⁴ They forgave him for being pitiless to the exiles who solicited their pardon through intercession.⁵ It mattered not how powerful the intercessors were—one of them was no less a personage than the King of Naples⁶—what use was it for Piero at so critical a time to recall a host of quarrelsome enemies? He made them vague promises⁷ instead, on which the far-sighted declined to count.⁸

¹ Nicod. to Sforza, *ibid.*

² G. Capponi, *Stor. di Fir.*, ii. 80.

³ "La brigata pur ne viene a sapere grado a Piero, perchè intendono che M. Luca se ne aiutava longe magis che Piero" (Nicod. to Sforza, September 14, 1465, *Orig.*, 1591, f. 151).

⁴ Machiavelli, vii. 107 A.

⁵ "Estimo che siate piuttosto in migliore che piggioro" (Aless. Macinghi to her exiled sons, September 15, 1464, Letter 36; *Lettere di una Gentild.*, p. 325). On the difficulties of a recall, see Letters 42 and 43, 5th and 7th February 1465, pp. 366 and 374, and that of Marco Parenti of July 27 following, *ibid.*, p. 447. They well knew that it was to Piero alone that they must address themselves: "E signoria che ha fare la volontà di chi governa, e così sono tutte, che fanno quello è ordinato loro" (Al. Macinghi, January 26, 1465, Letter 41, p. 360).

⁶ Letter of Lorenzo Strozzi, February 14, 1465, *Lettere di una Gentild.*, p. 384. Piero thought of sending his son Lorenzo to the King (July 20, 1465, *ibid.*, p. 456); he sent him, with courteous intent, a galley that this prince desired to buy, and in this negotiation one of the exiles served him as an intermediary, Filippo Strozzi (Letter from Piero to Filippo, May 4, 1465, *ibid.*, p. 412).

⁷ "Il Re vuole due cose da me: l'una è cotesta, l'altra è il fatto di Filippo. Questo posso fare io e farollo; quest'altro, cioè il vostro, bisogna che faccia anche quest'altri, e farassi quando fia tempo" (Piero's words, reported in a letter of Marco Parenti, June 22, 1465, *ibid.*, p. 426).

⁸ "Domanda grande" (Letter 39, *ibid.*, p. 431. See the commentary of this word in the notes, p. 349).

The morning of 16th September 1465 saw the splendid, peaceful, and popular victory of Luca Pitti. A petition, that had passed the preceding day through the usual course, would have been voted unanimously in the council of the Commons but for six white beans, and this final vote gave it the force of the law. The *balie* was then closed without further delay, though it should not have closed until the month of September, and though its renewal seemed assured. They then returned to the old method, so dear to the people—the nomination of public officers by the drawing of lots. Piero, who followed his father's practices,¹ had in vain induced his supporters to combat this motion; amongst them, Antonio de Puccio, Otto Niccolini, Luigi Guicciardini, and Tommaso Soderini, who did not side with his brother Niccolò.² Joy was universal. "The entire country," wrote Angelo Acciajuoli, "desires that the government should return to the way of our fathers."³ This political personage was full of the illusions of a conspirator.

Destiny, however, bestows singular favours. On the 1st of November the Signory accepted as Gonfalonier of Justice that same Niccolò Soderini, who was one of the chiefs of the conspiracy, and, we might add, its flag-bearer. The enchanted crowd accompanied him to the palace, and on the way placed a crown of laurels upon his head.⁴ But, as Machiavelli remarks, it was another proof how undesirable it is to take possession of a principality or a magistracy with extraordinary expectations.⁵ Soderini entered upon the office with the air of

¹ See an example of Cosimo's intrigues, suppressing the *divieto* of his friends when it embarrassed him, in one of Nicodemo's despatches, May 3, 1453, Orig., 1586, f. 203, and Buser, Append., p. 382.

² Tommaso Soderini had been ambassador and three times Gonfalonier of Justice. Machiavelli (vii. 108 A) and Ammirato (xxiii. 94) called him wise. Michele Bruto, while an enemy of the Medici, said the same of him: "Vir æque moderatus ac gravis" (L. iii. in Burm., vol. viii. part 1, p. 51).

³ Letter of Ang. Acciaj. to his son Jacopo, October 21, 1465, in *Lettere di una Gentild.*, p. 484. On this affair see again Alam. Rinuccini, p. 96; Morelli, *Del.*, xix. 181; Ammirato, xxiii. 94.

⁴ Machiavelli, viii. 107 B; Mich. Bruto, l. iii. p. 51.

⁵ Machiavelli, vii. 107 B.

a death-dealer, loudly asserting his intention of banishing Piero's partisans,¹ perhaps Piero himself;² but even among his friends he found adversaries. Luca Pitti and Dietisalvi Neroni, if they no longer wanted the government of the Medici, were still less anxious for popular government. Angelo Acciajuoli, notwithstanding his fine speeches, thought the same, and his sole aim was vengeance.

On the fourth day of his office, Soderini assembled a council of 500 citizens, and eight days after another of 300. To both he demonstrated, in eloquent discourses, the disorder of the situation; and instead of proposing a remedy, which was his business, he begged all those who had anything to propose to mount the tribune. Various opinions were given and circulated, it is certain, and as certainly nothing was decided. With his personal friends the courageous Gonfalonier really tried to put matters in order. The opposition of Luca Pitti, whose wealth was ill-gotten, upset his plans. He wished to suppress the Council of the One Hundred; Piero's faction again successfully opposed him. He was soon looked upon as powerless. After the first fortnight, the Florentines, who were expelled from the bourses in 1458, and who had flattered themselves they would return through him, had already lost all hope.³ To furnish a harmless relief for the itch of reform which consumed his brother, Tommaso Soderini advised him to reconstitute the bourses, a long and laborious operation, which might employ his activity during his second month of power. The innocent man fell into the trap. He called 530 citizens together for this great operation. The democracy loves large assemblies, but too many cooks spoil the broth. The bourses wanted reform in

¹ Letter from Al. Macinghi, January 25, 1466; *Lettere di una Gentild.*, p. 556, and note 1.

² "Dictogli (to Piero) essere avisato de bon loco chel confaloniero Nic. Sod. devia levare la terra a romore et confinar Piero et de l'altri" (Nicod. to Sforza, December 9, 1465, Orig., 1591, f. 220).

³ Letter of Aless. Macinghi, November 15, 1465; *Lettere di una Gentild.*, p. 512, and note 1.

every department, but they were only reformed in the Signory,¹ and even Ammirato accuses Soderini of partiality.² During his term of office he only succeeded in carrying a provision, voted for the time his brother was Gonfalonier, which granted a reward to whoever should kill a rebel,³—a human return to an inhuman party law, which must have irritated Tommaso, as he said disdainfully of this new Giano della Bella, "He entered like a lion, he will go out like a lamb."⁴ Less passionate, because she was only a witness and not an actor, Alessandra Macinghi Strozzi speaks in the same terms: "Proud at the start, he humbled himself; he began to humiliate himself when he found that the beans were not in his favour. I do not know what will become of him; but those who believed he would reach his aim have suffered a blow."⁵

As early as the first half of December, a reconciliation was accomplished between Piero and the malcontents, uneasy in the path in which this great reformer would drag them.⁶ There was only one point upon which they still disagreed; they preferred the alliance with Venice, in spite of their grounds of complaint,⁷

¹ Alam. Rinuccini, p. 97. He was one of the *squittinanti* or trustees of that operation. Cf. Machiavelli, vii. 108.

² Ammirato, xxiii. 95.

³ Machiavelli, vii. 108 A; Guicciardini, *Stor. Fior., Op. ined.*, vol. iii. p. 20; Nerli, l. iii. p. 51; Ammirato, xxiii. 94, 95.

⁴ Letter of Al. Macinghi, January 11, 1466; *Lettere di una Gentild.*, p. 550. Having sounded him, they knew what to expect: "Molti homini da bene . . . forono al confalonero, al quale parve essere in mal loco et scursossi assay . . . parendomi essere certo che questa popolata fosse proceduta da M. Angelo et da M. Detesalvi per intendere se luy inviliva o non, et forse per trovar miglior condicione con lui, mostrandogli che non fossero in dispositione de consentir verun suo mancamento" (Nicod. to Sforza, December 9, 1465, Orig., 1591, f. 220).

⁵ Letters of January 11, 1466, and December 21, 1465, *Lettere di una Gentild.*, p. 550 and 527.

⁶ "Questo busbu ha dato animo a Francesco de Nerone et a de l'altri a tirar inanti nova reconciliatione fra costoro" (Nicod. to Sforza, December 9, 1465, Orig., 1591, f. 220). "Piero me disse che M. Detesalvi era stato questa matina a luy et usatogli le miglior parole del mondo, mostrando che questo loro discidio è in tuto sopito, et che delibera essere suo. . ." (December 16, f. 223).

⁷ In 1463, Venice opposed the Florentines, who wanted to send galleys to the Levant for the protection of their traffic, under pretext that the Turks, if they seized them, would use them against Christianity, and warned them, if they passed Venice, the commander of the Venetian fleet had full power, and that the Senate

to one with Sforza, who had sucked the marrow of Florence without having done anything for her, and had even pretended to govern her;¹ but when personal interests are at stake at home, little is recked of foreign policy, in which they are less engaged. Thus little by little Soderini was forsaken by everybody. His ancient popularity could not defend him from the enemies he had made. When he resigned the gonfalon of justice to his successor, he did not dare to show himself in the streets unescorted by five or six men, armed to the teeth.²

Futile precaution! Piero easily gained for himself a reputation for clemency towards this poor "lion," who had allowed his claws to be cut. Neither Soderini nor Pitti were interfered with. As Guicciardini said, "They had lost their plumes."³ Soderini even took pride in showing a serene bearing, in offering black beans, that is, favourable votes, openly in the Common Council for the projects proposed by Piero, and in inviting his neighbours to do likewise. With such adversaries, accord and consistency were no longer compulsory for the victors. They could, "like children," change their intentions every day, and turn "like the leaves blown by the wind."⁴

As soon as Florence was put into order at home, foreign matters re-rose for discussion. Sforza's death (March 8, 1466) renewed the problem of alliances.⁵ Would his son and successor,⁶ Galeaz

would not trouble about the action of the Admiral with regard to the galleys (Alam. Rinuccini, p. 91).

¹ Nicod. to Sforza, December 16, f. 223. Needless to say that Nicodemo recited these accusations, and that Piero did likewise.

² Letter of Al. Macinghi, January 11, 1466; *Lettere di una Gentild.*, p. 550.

³ *Stor. Fior.*, *Op. ined.*, vol. ii. p. 20.

⁴ Letter of Al. Macinghi, January 25 and 30, 1466, p. 555, 568.

⁵ Letters of the Venetians to the King of Naples, March 11, 1466; *Arch. Sforz.*, Orig., 1591, f. 282. The 7th, they recalled the absent Galeaz in haste, because of "certo accidente che è sopravvenuto da heri in qua all' Ill S. tuo padre, el quale non è senza gran periculo de la sua salute" (*ibid.*, f. 279). Machiavelli dates the death of Sforza before the affair of Soderini, but Ammirato (xxiii. 95) finds him so full of errors regarding this period that he renounces the task of pointing them out.

⁶ Trollope (iii. 229) remarks that the name of Sforza belongs to the Visconti; that no one in Sforza's family had ever borne it, and that in giving it to his son six years before being Duke, Sforza seemed to have indicated his ambition to become one.

Maria, prove a solid support? He was only twenty years old, and had grown up in the indolence of a luxurious court, without having learned the use of arms, and nothing gave evidence in him of natural talents.¹ But he was brother-in-law of Louis XI., and it might be hoped he would be supported by the powerful arm of France.² Piero was so convinced of this that he offered him 40,000 ducats. Naturally, Galeaz accepted; but, like his father's son, he was dissatisfied,³ thought it little, and claimed more.⁴ It was hardly probable that he would obtain more; even upon this petty subject opposition broke out in the councils. Luca Pitti and his two acolytes, Angelo Acciajuoli and Detisalvi Neroni, looked upon this subsidy as the continuation of the alliance; and the engagement only was with Sforza, whose talents and military power were certainly worth the money to the Medici. Those around Piero replied, in his name, that if Florence abandoned Milan, Venice would win over the young and unintelligent prince, so that his very incapacity was another reason for succouring him. But the stern councils refused to vote the required sum, without which the alliance was in peril.⁵

The opponents were so far successful. Would this success be followed up? Would they, as Alamanno Rinuccini says, "suppress the Council of the Hundred, freedom's enemy, and give liberty to the people?"⁶ Men rapid of action and capable

¹ Simoneta, xxi. 775, 780. This author finishes here. *Ist. Bresc.*, xxi. 905; *Ann. Placent.*, xx. 916.

² April 8, 1466, the Signory wrote to Louis XI. on the subject of this death, and in notifying their grief, Louis XI. exhorted Florence to remain Galeaz's friend; and the 1st of the following July they replied to him that such was the intention of the Republic. See Desjardins, i. 136, 138, 140.

³ "Delle parole referte ad Fiorenza che V. S. et mi non portiamo quello amore ad quella signoria per li 40 mila ducati come facevamo inanzi . . . me pare che S. M. ricorda bene" (Galeaz to his mother, July 15, 1466, Orig., 1591, f. 357).

⁴ July 1466. Guicciardini, *Stor. Fior., Op. ined.*, iii. 19; Ammirato, xxiii. 95. This embassy must not be confounded with that of mere formality, which had in April notified Galeaz's succession, and of which Rinuccini speaks, p. 99.

⁵ Guicciardini, *Stor. Fior., Op. ined.*, iii. 20; Machiavelli, vii. 107 A; M. Bruto, l. ii., in *Burm.*, vol. viii. part 1, p. 38; Ammirato, xxiii. 95.

⁶ Alam. Rinuccini, p. 100.

of union were the necessary agents of the enterprise, and in the Signory they could only count on four friars as well as the Gonfalonier; ¹ and with five votes out of nine, it was impossible to reach the legal majority of two-thirds. Perhaps the drawing of lots would be more favourable on another occasion, and permit the renewal of the unsuccessful campaign and relieve Piero of the handling of public funds, thus ruining his credit in trade and his power in the State; but the time was long, and Dietisalvi was impatient. Turning against the son the ability which the father wished to assure his race, he tried to concert outside a vast conspiracy, not with the exiles, but with the princes. The attempt did not succeed; the King of Naples preferred to remain neutral; a blunder of Luca Pitti had offended the Pope; ² Venice, engaged with the Turks, contented herself with giving the conspirators the condottiere Bartolommeo Colleoni of Bergamo, whose *condotta* had expired. For want of better, Dietisalvi intended to pit Colleoni against Galeaz, the Duke of Anjou against King Ferrante, should the latter take part. Acciajuoli had an undertaking from Borso of Este, Duke of Modena, that he would send his brother Ercole with an army to support the revolt within, and make him captain-general of freed Florence. ³ Niccolò Soderini was charged to provoke and accomplish the revolt. With three hundred German soldiers he had engaged, he was to expel Piero, or better still, to kill him, remembering the bitter repentance of the Albizzi for having spared Cosimo. ⁴ The conspirators were bound by a solemn and secret oath before God and men. ⁵ In arming

¹ Ammirato, xxiii. 97.

² See the detail in G. Capponi, ii. 84.

³ Interrogation of Francesco Neroni, Dietisalvi's brother, September 10, 1466, and letter of a certain Ser Luca, September 6, in Fabroni, *Vita Laurentii Magnifici*, Doc., p. 28-32. This Luca is not Luca Pitti, of whom mention is made in this same letter.

⁴ *Comment. Jacobi Card. Papiensis*, l. iii., after the *Comm. Pii II.*, p. 381; Machiavelli, vii. 107; M. Bruto, l. ii. p. 50; Ammirato, xxiii. 95. Cf. Luca Landucci, *Diario*, p. 9; "el quale vollono amazzare, venendo da Careggi."

⁵ Angelo Acciajuoli to his son Jacopo, without date, in Fabroni, *Vita Laur.*, Doc., p. 29.

themselves, they flatly accused the Medici of creating the Signories, and of governing them according to their fancy; of bringing 500 cavaliers from Milan to Imola, and nearer still, to assemble parliament and expel the hostile citizens.¹

The accusation was not without foundation. On both sides the iron was in the fire. It was the interest, above all, of the conspirators to draw theirs out promptly, so that daylight should not penetrate the mystery; they did not do so quickly enough. From far Bologna, Giovanni Bentivoglio had time to warn Piero that Ercole of Este with his army was at Fiumalbo, on the borders of Pistoia. Helpless as he was, Piero had himself hurriedly transported from Careggi on August 27.² If he had attacked during the night, a contemporary says, he might have made small work of his adversaries, who were not ready; but he deemed it wiser to wait until the morrow, when he should be surrounded by those he had called to his aid.³

It was the day for drawing lots for the new Signory, and it was known that, according to custom, the Gonfalonier would be taken from the quarter of Santa Croce, almost entirely devoted to the Medici. Roberto Lioni's name turned up in the special bourse. His colleagues followed him into Piero's camp.⁴ The rumour ran that the bourses had been privately cleared;⁵ for it is well known that drawing by lot is not a conclusive impediment to jobbing. Hardly named, the mem-

¹ Alam. Rinuccini, p. 100.

² *Cron. Bol.*, xviii. 763. Al. Rinuccini (p. 101) believes the letters of Bentivoglio to be forged by Piero. A very improbable and hostile supposition. We must regard as a fable the danger which Piero is supposed to have run of being killed in this short passage by an ambuscade at Sant' Antonio del Vescovo, and the devotion of his son Lorenzo, who, galloping in advance, saved him by making him take another road. No contemporary hints a word about the adventure. It was reported for the first time by Nic. Valori (*Laurentii Medicis Vita*, p. 10, ed. of Flor., 1740), probably to commence the legend of the Magnificent, reproduced since by all authors, except by M. Bruto, who has denied it (l. iii. p. 55).

³ Alam. Rinuccini, p. 101.

⁴ "Uomo sensato e buon popolano; ma l'ambizione lo volse alla parte di Piero. Gli altri signori altresì" (J. Pitti, l. i. *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., i. 22).

⁵ Alam. Rinuccini, p. 101; Ammirato, xxiii. 97.

bers of the future Signory went to the palace to take their cue from the signors leaving office, and once entered, they refused to go out again, although their installation was due only on the 1st September. They had to be put out by force.¹ Thus for the wielders of real power the old institutions and old customs, even in appearance, no longer commanded respect.

Warned in this way, the conspirators ought to have made up for lost time, but a body of many heads is incapable of decisive movement. They had arranged everything for attack, and nothing at all for defence. In the presence of courageous enemies, Soderini and Pitti wasted time in mutual reproaches,² and disputed expenses which neither wished to pay.³ Piero, whom nobody thought so clever, profited by these delays to force the timid, who were numerous, to compromise themselves in his favour. He circulated leaves upon which his adherents inscribed their names. With the zealous were inscribed many of the indifferent, and a goodly number even of the conspirators, some in good faith, and these were friends gained, and others insincerely, who were henceforth lost in the eyes of their accomplices who had remained firm.⁴ Assuredly, the firmest was Soderini, a man of immovable convictions, and certain, besides, that Piero would never forgive him for not having been the first to join him. Counting upon two hundred friends and three German regiments, he begged Luca Pitti finally to consent to take up arms, "to run through the town;" according to Rinuccini, salvation lay therein.⁵ Luca refused; he alleged his respect for Cosimo's family, and his desire to spare his own from popular fury.⁶ These late reflections

¹ Alam. Rinuccini, p. 101.

² Ammirato, xxiii. 97.

³ "I quali divisi e non concordi alle spese, attendendo ciascuno che l'altro somministrasse alla bisogna denari" (J. Pitti, l. i. p. 22). He who spoke in this way was a descendant of Luca Pitti, favourable to the conspirators, and who stated that they all obeyed the Signory in laying down their arms, whilst only a portion of Piero's partisans did likewise.

⁴ Ammirato, xxiii. 97.

⁵ Alam. Rinuccini, p. 104.

⁶ *Comment. Jacobi Card. Papiensis*, l. iii., after *Comm. Pii II.*, p. 381.

were shared by Dietisalvi Neroni; he perceived that his house, being close to Piero's, might be burned or sacked at the same time.¹ But Luca made one step farther, and a decisive one. On the 29th he visited Piero, still moaning in bed. Both embraced and kissed each other on the lips. It was believed that, with the help of Antonio Puccio, they had already agreed to become friends. The intermediary dazzled the eyes of the conspirator with all sorts of seductions and advantages, notably his daughter's marriage with one of Piero's dearest relatives. By this he seemed to mean Lorenzo, the heir-apparent; but by not pronouncing any name he left it open afterwards to say that he had never thought of such an alliance.² This Luca did not fear; it is so easy to believe what we desire.

To private agreements succeeded next day (August 30) a public agreement. The departing signors and those entering office met, and had presented to them the chiefs of both parties. Luca Pitti came unarmed; Piero excused himself on the plea of his gout, which had not prevented him from coming from Careggi when his own interest called him to Florence. He sent his two sons, bearing letters from Bentivoglio, which announced the approach of Ercole d'Este. The lords having forbidden the latter to advance farther, and commanded the citizens to lay down their arms within twenty-four hours, presented the conditions of peace, which were accepted and signed on the one side by Luca Pitti, and on the other by Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medicis.

But here burst out in all its candour the bad faith of this

¹ J. Pitti, l. i., *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., i. 21.

² Later, in fact, instead of Lorenzo, Piero substituted a Tornabuoni, his son's uncle (J. Pitti, *loc. cit.*, p. 22-24; Nerli, l. iii. p. 52; Ammirato, xxiii. 97; Jacopo Nardi, *Istorie della Città di Firenze*, p. 21, Flor., 1842). J. Pitti ascribes different motives to his ancestor; remembrance of his old friendship with Cosimo; distrust of his companions; desire to continue the construction of his palace; to finish his days in peace, being already more than seventy-two; a promise to be made *accompigliatore*, and his brother Luigi to create the Eight, as well as the prospective marriage.

family of aspirants to the principality. When the conspirators were disarmed, Piero mysteriously gathered together in his house a band of armed men—some say as many as six thousand¹—at the very time he bade the agents of Galeaz send back to Milan the troops which the young Duke had sent to his assistance.²

He knew that he had nothing more to fear from his enemies at home, and we may hesitate to believe that he feared much from those without. However, having learned that six thousand infantry and eight hundred horse were bearing down from Modena to San Marcello in the mountains of Pistoia, he produced without delay his hidden satellites to guard the place in spite of the counter-orders of the Signory, and he recalled the Milanese contingent, that was not far off. His pretext, which he might have thought of earlier, was that the morrow was the day of installation of the new signors, and that nobody knew "if among the wicked, without faith or love of God, some irreparable mischief might not happen."³

Nothing happened.⁴ Without waiting any longer, Piero, finding the sails well filled, on the 2nd of September shut the gates of San Gallo against an improbable surprise from without. Then he garrisoned the place with a thousand armed men under the command of two members of the Bardi family, to which his mother belonged.⁵ All was ready now for the assembling of the public. The bell having rung out its call, those who had anything to fear in this display of force rushed thither unarmed, and even a good many of the important people,

¹ Alam. Rinuccini, p. 101 ; J. Pitti, l. i. p. 23 ; Ammirato, xxiii. 98.

² "Hier sera vi mandammo a dire per Sagamore de Arimino, poy ve habiamo scripto per tre nostre lettere che devesino recondurre nderetto quelle gente d'arme duchesche, et questo parendoci havere bene assettate le cose de qui" (Piero and Nicodemo to Orfeo de Ricavo and Antonio de Pesaro, intimates of the Duke of Milan, August 31, 1466, Orig., 1591, f. 364.

³ *Ibid.* ; Alam. Rinuccini, p. 102 ; Ammirato, xxiii. 99.

⁴ Luca Landucci, *Diario*, p. 9, says, however, that the meeting of parliament was held September 1.

⁵ Alam. Rinuccini, p. 103 ; Ammirato, xxiii. 99 ; Letter from Ser Luca, September 6, 1466, in Fabroni, *Vita Laur.*, Doc., p. 31.

who saw the end, and did not wish to be ranked with the defeated. Among these were not only Luca Pitti, already reconciled, but Dietisalvi Neroni. The greater number held themselves in reserve. Luca Landucci, whose chronicle has lately been published, says that the town was in commotion, and that all the shops, to escape sacking, were several times closed.¹

The public meeting had a natural result. *Balie* was granted for four months—until the end of September—to the lords and colleges of this period—conjointly with all those who had been Gonfaloniers of Justice from 1434, and with a hundred citizens to be elected by the lords and colleges in power. This commission of three hundred members had equal rights with the people in reforming the town and punishing the guilty.² The trick was played without much difficulty, but not without a good deal of indignation. “We are in Piero’s power,” we read in a letter of the time; “he can do what he likes, but I do not think he will do wrong.” And, heedless of contradiction, a little farther on: “You should see now what his intention is. God be praised, but not for that. Show the best countenance you can. As for me, I sweat with anger in writing this letter, though it is morning and very cold.”³

In truth, the defeated could not show a bold countenance. It was obvious that Florence would have gained nothing in their triumph. Angelo Acciajuoli, who had extolled the alliance with Venice against Milan, swore by all his gods to Nicodemo that his triumph would not have injured Milan.⁴ Trembling, he took his hands, adjured him to say if there were anything to

¹ Luca Landucci, *Diario*, p. 9.

² Pietro of Landriano to Bianca and Galeaz. Sent to Naples, and passing through Florence, he relates what passed, September 13, 1466, Orig., 1591, f. 374.

³ Letter of Ser Luca, September 6, 1466, in Fabroni, *Vita Laur.*, Doc., p. 31, 32.

⁴ “Quando gli fosse facta alcuna novità sotto el caldo vostro, non se seria l’honore vostro” (Nicod. to Bianca and Galeaz, September 5, 1466, Orig., 1591, f. 369).

fear, and he was only half reassured by the reply that "Piero was good, and that they had used him in a strange way."¹ He solicited a fresh interview with his interlocutor, and obtained it for the morrow in the Church of Santa Trinita, whither he went with Dietisalvi. There they both bluntly asked the important Nicodemo if they ought to go to the devil,² seeing that the town threatened them with banishment. The Milanese ambassador replied laughingly, "Quod nemo leditur nisi ab se ipso," but that he did not believe that Piero was treating them as he would have been treated himself had they gained the day. Then Angelo called for his mule, and the three went off together to Piero. There the two defeated friends rivalled each other in submission and abjection. They promised to be the first at the palace to advise the making of the bourses *a mano*, and asserted that the villains who had not understood their duty would remain in the mire.³

It was impossible to wriggle out of a scrape more coolly. But this was not all. The Archbishop of Florence, Dietisalvi's brother, kept at home by gout, entreated Nicodemo to come to him, and with tears in his eyes recommended his family to him, though many of them hardly deserved indulgence. Nicodemo protested his master Galeaz's goodwill, but therein he probably went too far, and perhaps lied.⁴ The prelate, he thought, should recommend his brothers to show themselves grateful—"to ask no more than a part of this world." Returning to Piero, he found Dietisalvi again, backed by two of his brothers, who

¹ "Mi prese la mano et me scongiurò ch'io gli dicessi quel credevo certamente se gli doveva essere facta novità veruna, respondendoli ch'io credevo di nò per respecto a la bontà del M^{co} Piero, etiam che luy havesse tenuti stranii modi" (*Ibid.*).

² It must not be forgotten that the Italians, religious in form, said, "to go away with God;" but this phrase has the same sense as the opposite phrase, in which we replace God by the devil.

³ "Che questi gaglioffi che non havevano saputo cognoscere el partito loro, remanessero ne la feza" (*Ibid.*).

⁴ September 4, 1466, Bianca Maria and Galeaz Maria wrote to Nicodemo to show their joy in Piero's victory, and to exhort him to arrange now, while he could, that such movements would not recur, for they injured all Italy. "Non bisogna fidarsi più de costoro nè de loro belle parole" (Orig., 1591, f. 367).

renewed their concert of protested devotion; and Luca Pitti, who thought it a great thing to raise the bourses *a mano* for ten years, and who approved of everything else that could contribute to the strength of the Medici.

In the afternoon of the same day, the barefaced trick was accomplished in the palace. The *balie* decided as well that the complaisant Council of One Hundred should be maintained: ¹ "all violent and tyrannical things," writes Rinuccini, "and already resolved upon for several months, for I had heard them spoken of." ² An inimical assertion, it will be said; but here is the statement of a friend, of a compromising friend: "It is certain," we read in one of Nicodemo's despatches, "that having the bourses *a mano*, and in consequence the palace at our disposition, it will not be so easy to conspire as before." ³

All the same, Piero, who had played his stakes, was less assured. He saw the Duke of Milan ready to withdraw his troops from Romagna; the Duke of Modena disposed to support the malcontents; Soderini, Dietisalvi, and the latter's two sons advancing towards the states of this ruler; Acciajuoli and his friends seeking refuge in Sienna, that is, among his enemies. ⁴ It was prudent; if a few believed Piero's hand struck lightly, ⁵ others feared it would be too heavy, ⁶ and those proved in the right.

Before the 10th September, Francesco Neroni, one of Dietisalvi's brothers, was put to torture, and pain forced him to confess that assistance had been asked of the Duke of

¹ Nicod. to Bianca and Galeaz, September 5, 1466, Orig., 1591, f. 369; Alam. Rinuccini, p. 103; Ammirato, xxiii. 99; Letter of Ser Luca, September 6, 1466, in Fabroni, *Vita Laur.*, Doc., p. 31.

² Alam. Rinuccini, p. 103. "Per modo che Piero ha quel che chiede a pontino" (Nicod. to Bianca and Galeaz, September 5, 1466, f. 369).

³ Nicod. to Bianca and Galeaz, September 5, 1466, f. 369.

⁴ Nicod., September 10, f. 371; Pietro Landriano, September 13, f. 374; J. Pitti, l. i. p. 23, 24. They had left Soderini on the 5th, the two others on the 6th.

⁵ "Disposto a menare le mane molto leggiere" (Nicod., September 5, f. 369).

⁶ "Parmi ocelli a la gratia del populo" (Nicod., September 10, f. 371).

⁶ Vespasiano, *Vita di Agn. Acciajuoli*, c. 12; *Spicil. Rom.*, i. 473.

Modena, and that this prince had advised Piero's death, after which he would mediate between the triumphant conspirators and the Venetians. Twenty other citizens were incarcerated at the same time. On the same day the delay accorded the summoned fugitives expired.¹ On the morrow, the 11th, they were condemned to twenty years' exile, "for having sought to introduce armed force and for acting against freedom:". Dietisalvi and his family to Sicily; Acciajuoli and his son to the kingdom beyond the Barletta;² Soderini to Provence. For twenty years also were their partisans deprived of office, and severely mulcted of fines, which went as high as 12,000 ducats.³ On the following Sunday (September 14), while a grand procession was in preparation, and the Priors with the other public officers were hearing mass in the cathedral, the Eight of guard seized the persons of other suspects, and even in the church arrested a certain Salvestro Nardi, who had been one of them. A relation of the Gonfalonier of Justice, Salvestro sought a refuge near him; but this high protection did not save him from perpetual exile.⁴ Guido Bonciani, one of the captains of the Guelph party, once so redoubtable, was seized in the midst of his colleagues and conducted to prison.⁵ Other less important families suffered like penalties.⁶ Such was the rage of the *balie* and the people, that a hunt was made in the town. The most innocent, examining their conscience, anxiously questioned themselves lest by chance they should have spoken against

¹ Nicod., September 10, f. 371; Pietro Landriano, September 13, f. 374.

² Acciajuoli begged Nicodemo to obtain for him the permission to live in any part of the kingdom; but the matter was too recent for any chance of success (Nicod., September 15, f. 376).

³ Pietro Landriano, September 13, f. 374; Alam. Rinuccini, p. 104; J. Pitti, l. i. p. 20; *Ist. Bresc.*, xxi. 1012; Nerli, l. iii. p. 52; Ammirato, xxiii. 100. Morelli (*Del.*, xix. 182) dates these proscriptions January 29, 1467. The unpublished documents agree with the other writers.

⁴ J. Pitti, l. i. p. 24; Nardi, l. i. vol. i. p. 21.

⁵ J. Pitti, l. i. p. 24.

⁶ Guernieri Bernio (*Storia d'Agobbio*, xxi. 1012) gives a long list of the condemned. Cf. *Comment. Card. Papiens.*, after *Comm. Pii II.*, l. iii. p. 382; Machiavelli, vii. 109 A; M. Bruto, l. iii. p. 67; Ammirato, xxiii. 99, 100.

Piero the year before.¹ Even Luca Pitti would have been imprisoned, if Cosimo had not defended him as a relation; ² but this mercy was the final blow. Accused of having given the names of his friends, the aged Luca ended his long life in universal contempt, without a soul to work for him in his palace.³ History has not even cared to give us the date of his last day.⁴

After this first step, Piero made many another. On September 15 he decided to put an end to the severities. "This was the best means he could have found to cut the nails of a few of those animals who cannot and do not know how to live otherwise than by brigandage. I believe," adds the inexorable Nicodemo, "that it is wishing the impossible, for we have never known a popular state in which the strong have not endeavoured to raise themselves at the expense of the weak. However, Piero hoped to teach them to lick instead of to bite."⁵ He went farther; he granted what he had hitherto always refused—the recall of a certain number of the old exiles. They had prostrated themselves at his feet. "God," the Strozzi wrote to him, "has assured you victory against bad citizens; to recall the exiles is to thank God."⁶ On September 20 they received the reward of their platitudes,⁷ and if they have an excuse, it is in the delight they exhibited on their return. "Try to arrange," Filippo Strozzi writes,

¹ J. Pitti, l. i. p. 24.

² Luca Pitti married one of his daughters to Giovanni Tornabuoni. See Luca Landucci, *Diario*, p. 9.

³ The Pitti Palace remained unfinished until the Medici, become princes, bought it and made it their residence.

⁴ Alam. Rinuccini, p. 104; letter of Ser Luca, September 6, 1466, in Fabroni, *Vita Laur.*, Doc., p. 31; Nardi, l. i. vol. i. p. 22; Nerli, l. iii. p. 52; Machiavelli, vii. 109 B; Ammirato, xxiii. 99, 100.

⁵ Nicod. to Bianca and Galeaz, September 15, 1466, Orig., 1591, f. 376. September 4, Bianca and Galeaz exhorted Piero to be severe (f. 367); on 13th they rejoiced in what had happened, since every one could now sleep in peace (f. 374).

⁶ See *Lettere di una Gentild.*, p. 581, 582.

⁷ The text of the decision is to be found in the registers of the *Balie*, p. 16-18. M. Guasti has published it in *Lettere di una Gentild.*, p. 581.

announcing his arrival, "that we shall sup upon something else besides sausages."¹

But the Strozzi were old exiles, and an effort of memory was necessary to discover the cause of their disgrace. The proscribed of yesterday could not hope for like mercy. They had to make up their minds to live in exile for a time at least. The Signory, despatching the account of their defeat to Louis XI., lent them the blackest intentions, and held them up as wild beasts, whose criminal fury the people had repressed "by establishing liberty."² It would have been better to have compared them to vile and crawling beasts, for they had no dignity in their exile, and they had not the Strozzi's excuse of having pined in a long absence from their hearths. The only pretext they could plead, if indeed it be one, was the discomfort of meeting in foreign towns the sons of those they had themselves persecuted when they expelled the factors of the oligarchy. Angelo Acciajuoli, who had been one of these persecutors, flattered himself with the hope of recall in memory of his services. In high-flown terms, that ill concealed the baseness of his thoughts, he wrote to Piero from Sienna on 17th September—he was one of those who do not know how to wait—that the honour of the Medici was involved in his disgrace. To which Piero made reply in a tone of haughty mildness, that he himself was willing to forgive, but that the Republic, which had full and free power over him, "could not, and, for example's sake, should not" pardon.³ Dietisalvi, having less in his past to boast of than Angelo, did not recall his services, but he sought to offer them to deserve his pardon ;

¹ November 27, 1466. *Ibid.*, p. 582.

² "Inflati superbia atque avaritia, et pessimis occitati libidinibus . . . immanissimarum ferarum ritu . . . Populus arma sumens brevi eorum perditissimum furorem penitus repressit, libertatem constituit. . . Firmata et corroborata undique libertas est" (Text in Desjardins, i. p. 141, 142; Louis XI.'s reply, January 14, 1467, p. 143, is only a paraphrase).

³ See text of these two letters in Fabroni, *Vita Laur.*, Doc., p. 36. Cf. Vespasiano, *Vita di Agn. Acciajuoli*, c. 12, *Spicil. Rom.*, i. 473, who formally states that Piero wanted to recall Agnolo.

he revealed the projects of the exiles, and promised, if allowed to return, to find a remedy and uphold Piero actively. The spirit of evil-doing was so rooted in him that he prayed the friend to whom he intrusted his confidence to breathe it only "to the Madonna and to the lord."¹ This is the first time in Florence we find the word *lord* used in speaking of a citizen, or even to a citizen. Until then it had only been used in the singular in reference to the Italian tyrants, and out of courtesy in the plural to the Priors. This was then another step in public debasement. It is a degradation of the mind that dubs Piero lord² the day after a victory like one of Cosimo's.

It is a pleasure to find one self-respecting man among so many vile creatures, a man of mediocre intelligence, but of much character. Niccolò Soderini showed more firmness, and his example was followed—far away from the master, it is true. Rather than accept the narrow and isolated life in the places assigned to them, a large number of the proscribed followed Niccolò to Venice, where they were out of reach, and where they enjoyed liberty of speech and action in the midst of older exiles, once their enemies, and now their allies. Soderini, whose honourable poverty was well known, even obtained from the Most Serene Republic a monthly allowance of a hundred ducats.³ By this he was recognised and proclaimed as the chief of the exiles.

In exile, and in the plenitude of recovered freedom, what

¹ "Ti priego di questo non parli se non con Madonna e col Signore" (De Pigello, October 8, 1466, in Fabroni, *Vita Laur.*, Doc., p. 35). Dietisalvi's epitaph, who died in 1482 at the age of eighty-one, may be read in Reumont, *Lor. de' Med.*, l. ii. c. iii. vol. i. p. 259. It can be said that perfidy and bad faith were the curse of the times; but the Italians everywhere were regarded as worse than any other race. "E dicevano che nuy Italiani non servano may fede." The ambassador Maletta, who reported this comment from Louis XI.'s court to his master, Sforza, was not indignant, and made no protest (December 20, 1493, in Buser, *Append.*, p. 418).

² This progress in public abasement is proved by the courtier, Nerli, l. iii. p. 52.

³ Roumain, *Stor. di Venez.*, l. xi. c. i. p. 326, n. 1, from the Venetian archives, Secr., xxiii. 69.

could these embittered Florentines do? Naturally they conspired. Would they succeed in pressing Venice into a new adventure? This was the question. Hostilities against the Turks absorbed the strength and the attention of the Council of Ten. But insistently solicited, in anticipated Machiavellism, the Council pointed out a middle path. The most renowned captain of the peninsula since the death of his rivals, the lettered condottiere, Bartolommeo Colleoni, free for the moment, desired an engagement for his old age, to die, like Sforza, with the dignity of a duke and a lord. Without brilliant actions to his credit, his brain was haunted by the thought of them, and he pondered strange designs.¹ The malcontents of every nationality paid court to him. Those of Milan persuaded him that he could do anything with that incapable lad, Galeaz Maria. Those of Florence murmured that he might become the arbitrator of all Italy; he only had to overthrow the established authority of the town, which alone was mighty enough to break Milan's alliance with Naples, who served as a check upon Venice. Under these conditions, if the struggle began, Venice promised secret supplies, and was ready to profit by events if they turned out well, and to disown them if things turned out badly. This was easy enough, for she could always insist and prove that Colleoni was not in her pay.²

The orators of Florence followed the facts closely, and reported to their Government all the secret projects, the suspicious goings and comings, and the frequent negotiations. "Every day Dietisalvi is to be seen in the Council of the Pregadi or in Colleoni's camp," they wrote. Henceforth there was no reason to spare these exiles, themselves ready to cancel their sentence of banishment. They were declared rebels, their lands and

¹ See his biographer, who lived with him at Malpaga, *Antonii Cornazzani vatis placentini de vita et gestis Bartholomæi Colei principis bello invictissimi commentariorum libri sex*, in Burmann, vol. ix. part 7, p. 1-38; Malipieri, *Annali Veneti*, in *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., vii. 211; Ricotti, iii. 120-126, 205-207; Reumont, *Lor. de' Med.*, l. ii. c. iii. vol. i. p. 236.

² Malpieri, *Ann. Ven.*, *loc. cit.*, p. 211.

goods were confiscated, and whoever liked was at liberty to take their lives (December 1466—January 1467). At the same time the Signory wrote to the princes that the intrigues of the exiles would probably force Florence into war, although her own desire was for peace.¹

But these sentences of contumacy struck no terror home. Even confiscation, the only effectual one, but half succeeded, thanks to the habit, universal among Florentine traders, of spreading their offices and capital. This left them still rich enough to pay Colleoni, to treat with the Italian princes as a state would have done, and offer a salary to Ercole of Este, with fourteen hundred horse,² and the same afterwards to the lords of Carpi, of Mirandola, of Forli, of Anguillara, and Faenza. The latter, Astorgio Manfredi, had promised Piero to keep the pass of the valley of Lamona; his defection placed the Florentine army, that he had received into his dominions, in great peril.³ Even Alessandro Sforza, the late Duke of Milan's brother, and an ancient ally of Florence, sent his son Costanzo to the army of the exiles. To their side leant all the old friends of the Florentine Republic, as if the growing power of the Medici inspired every one with fear and repulsion.

So, when Colleoni crossed the Po (May 10), the army under his command counted no less than eight thousand horse and six thousand old and well-trying infantry troops. Not since Piccinino's time had a condottiere headed such a splendid army in Italy.⁴ Unfortunately, the aged captain manœuvred with senile dilatoriness, and Florence had time to take a defensive attitude. She had leisure to strengthen her alliance with Galeaz Maria, the Pope,⁵ and the King of Naples; she formed and

¹ Ammirato, xxiii. 100.

² *Ist. Bresc.*, xxi. 908; Pigna, *Stor. de' Principi d'Este*, l. viii. p. 730.

³ *Comment. Card. Papiens.*, l. iii. p. 384; M. Bruto, l. iv. p. 82, 83; Ricotti, iii. 207; Sismondi, vi. 459.

⁴ Ammirato, xxiii. 100; Ricotti, iii. 207; G. Capponi, ii. 90; Sismondi, vi. 459.

⁵ June 11, 1467, Florence thanked Louis XI. for having procured her the goodwill of Paul II. Text in Desjardins, i. 149.

enlarged her army, until, by reinforcements, it nearly equalled that of the exiles; the command was given to Federigo of Montefeltro. The balance was kept by the fact that Montefeltro also was old and incapable of the enthusiasm which would have triumphed over an obstinate temporising. Machiavelli calls the excessive prudence of these two captains "marvellous cowardice."¹

Thus the war dragged a ruinous and useless length. On the 6th November, after six months' ineffectual and aimless manœuvring, Colleoni finally reached Dovadola, upon the territory of Imola, with Dietisalvi, Soderini, and other rebels, indicating thus his intention to enter Tuscany by Romagna. At this news the Ten of War were elected, and among them Piero himself.² Three of Dietisalvi's brothers were flung into the *Stinche*.³ But the brainless Galeaz Maria had to be counted upon, an ally more dangerous than useful, whose presumption and ignorance compromised everything. In abuse of his princely authority, he had twice stupidly forced the Captain-General Montefeltro to fight at the wrong moment, and twice run away, panic-stricken at the hour of action. Had Colleoni been more enterprising, he might have destroyed the Florentine army. Upon Montefeltro's request Galeaz was summoned to Florence, under the pretext of conferring with the Council of Ten.⁴ The young prince came at once (July 24), bearing, fastened to the sleeve of his doublet, an open and empty purse, fit symbol of his begging race. This time the people of Florence received him coldly; not aware of the

¹ *Comment. Card. Papiens.*, l. iii. p. 387; Machiavelli, vii. 110 B.

² Ammirato, xxiii. 101.

³ Morelli, *Del.*, xix. 184. On the following 19th February, two other brothers of the same Dietisalvi were declared rebels. They were released from prison in July 1468 (*Ibid.* p. 184-185).

⁴ *Comment. Card. Papiens.*, l. iii. p. 387; Machiavelli, vii. 110 B; Ammirato, xxiii. 101. Sismondi (vi. 460) wrongly believes, through an exaggerated interpretation of some of the Cardinal's words, that Galeaz's rank forced him to leave the command to the King of Naples' son, who was also in the camp; but he had his share of authority.

motive of his coming, they regarded him as a cowardly defaulter from the field of battle.¹

In his absence the camp prepared for battle. The armies were face to face, Montefeltro near Imola, Colleoni at the Mulinella, where he had fortified himself. In the afternoon of the 23rd July,² Montefeltro gave the signal for attack. They say there never was so fierce a fight in those times,³ but everything is relative. The *espingardes*, used then for the first time, except at sieges, were more noisy than dangerous. Colleoni was regarded as barbarous and cruel,⁴ because he had them carried on small chariots which the soldiers only exposed as they fired them off. As for those who accused him of cruelty, they shouted, in obedience to their chiefs, "*Carne! carne!* no quarter!" Night did not separate the combatants; they continued their manœuvres and their harmless attacks in torchlight, like a tournament. Then, finally, one condottiere having invited the other to rest, the soldiers and captains advanced into the space between both armies, and shook hands heartily while they exchanged congratulations upon the preservation of their lives.⁵

When, on the 27th, everything was over, Galeaz was permitted to return to the camp.⁶ But hurt that he had been prevented from making a fool of himself, he recrossed the Po

¹ Morelli, *Del.*, xix. 183; Alam. Rinuccini, p. 107, 108.

² This date is given by *Diario Ferrarese*, xxiv. 211. Most authors say the 25th, and *Cron. d'Agobbio*, xxi. 1013, the 24th. In Morelli (*Del.*, xix. 183) we see that news of the battle reached Florence on the 25th. The combat beginning in the afternoon, the date of the 25th is put aside, and the 24th becomes even improbable.

³ Sabellico, Dec. iii. l. viii. p. 733. Machiavelli (vii. 110 B) also says for the third time in his History that nobody was killed. A few authors give the number of the dead and prisoners. Pigna (l. viii. p. 731) says a thousand of the one, and as many of the others; Ammirato (xxiii. 102) says on the Venetian side alone from 300 to 800.

⁴ P. Jove, *Elogia*, iii. 237, Bâle, 1571. Text reported in Fabroni, *Vita Laur.*, Doc., p. 38, and Ricotti, iii. 208.

⁵ Baldi, *Vita di Federico d'Urbino*, l. viii. p. 99, Bologna, 1826, quoted by Ricotti, iii. 209. On this battle see, besides the authors already quoted, *Comment. Card. Papiens.*, l. iii. p. 389; Cornazzani, *Vita Colei*, l. iv., in *Burm.*, vol. ix. part 7, p. 18-24; Marin Sanuto, xxii. 1184.

⁶ Morelli, *Del.*, xix. 163.

upon his own account to beat back Philip of Bresse, the Duke of Savoy's brother-in-law, who menaced Milan. A truce of twenty days was concluded—not a magnificent result for such a mighty effort. Venice, in her repose, none the less seized all Florentine merchant vessels with their merchandise on the high seas, and at the same time provoked the Genoese Riviera to revolt against Milan.

But finding all Italy opposed to her,¹ she inclined to peace so long as she was left elbow-room upon sea, and she proved her policy by making restitution of the confiscated merchandise.² The feeling was general. The King of Naples advised a defensive attitude, and remarked that Colleoni was not a thunderbolt.³ Colleoni would gladly have given up Dovadola to the Florentine exiles; but he did not want to fan the flame. Tommaso Soderini, Piero's ambassador in Venice, was anxious for the honour of signing peace there. Indeed, the exiles were no longer to be feared; short of money, they were despised; still worse, they were abandoned. Three of Dietisalvi's brothers and his nephew, who had stirred up Prato and the Mugello, were brought to Florence, while his wife, in her own country, provoked a rising of friends and relations.⁴ "Every one is dissatisfied," wrote Niccolò Roberti to his master, Borso d'Este, Duke of Modena; "few of the people work, and each day another shop is shut up. If Venice opposes peace, nothing less is spoken of than an attack in her own gulf in spite of the risk that Piero will seize the proceeds of the taxes. The load is so heavy that, if the war continues, each one will walk off, or accomplish something out of the way."⁵

¹ Malipieri, *Ann. Ven.* in the *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., vol. vii. p. 216-218 and 221-224, gives Galeaz's speeches upon this subject to the Venetian ambassadors, and G. Capponi republishes them (ii. 91-93).

² G. Capponi, ii. 93.

³ "Non erit hic Coleo is qui uno morsu devoret tot robustissima quot illi opposuimus presidia" (The King of Naples to the Florentines, May 23, 1467, *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., xv. 186, 189).

⁴ November 22, the captain of the *balie* expelled this woman beyond the *contado*. See Ammirato, xxiii. 103.

⁵ Desp. in cipher, Niccolò Roberti to Duke Borso d'Este, Florence, January 12,

It was a wise step on Piero's side to solicit the intervention of Borso d'Este, Duke of Modena: to pacify Italy had been, from the beginning of the century, the traditional vow of his family. The obstacle was the Pope, who did his best to prevent it. Paul II. persuaded Borso that the safety of the small powers lay in the discords of the great, and that they increased the importance of the Holy See, and told the Florentines that he might join them against Venice.¹ Then all at once he turned round most unexpectedly; he wanted to change places with Borso as a mediator. But he was wanting in tact; he could not make Florence agree with him, her only wish being for universal peace, or persuade Piero, who intended to exclude the exiles from it. So he lost patience, and abandoning the Florentines to their fate, forced an agreement by excommunication (February 2, 1468).

This was easy enough, since, nobody having gained anything, there was nothing to give up. But he upset the matter by an unexpected clause; he demanded an annual payment of 100,000 ducats² for Colleoni, the elected general of Christianity against the Turks in Albania, and each party dreaded the employment of this gold by the captain to enslave the peninsula. The Duke of Milan and the King of Naples made imperious protest, threatening to take up arms, and to make appeal against the Papal sentence at the next council. Piero, more modest, had already decided that Florence would only pay her part when Colleoni was upon Turkish territory. In the meantime he taxed the Republic 1,200,000 florins, to

1468. *Atti e memorie delle deputazioni di storia patria per le provincie modenesi e parmensi*, vol. i. p. 249, Modena, 1863.

¹ Pigna, l. viii. p. 732, 734. This author gives or inserts Francesco Naselli's speech, the ambassador of Ferrara, who tried to baffle the Pope's manœuvres without offending him. Cf. Sismondi, vi. 462.

² The contribution of each State was fixed, and the figures are curious. The Holy See, Naples, Venice, and Milan give each 19,000 ducats; Florence, 15,000; Sienna, 4,000; Modena, 3,000; Mantua and Lucca, 1,000 each. The decree is to be found in *Ann. Eccl.*, 1468, sec. 15-20, vol. xix. p. 454, and in Malipieri, *Ann. Ven., Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., vii. 231. Cf. *Comment. Card. Papiens.*, l. iv. p. 392; Navagero, xxii. 1185; Alam. Rinuccini, p. 109; Ammirato, xxiii. 103.

be raised in three years, and his letters, sent all over Italy, declared the high position of Colleoni intolerable, since, having caused the war, he had not been able to triumph.

Paul II. treated the aged condottiere as he had treated the proscribed Florentines; he cut out of his bull the clause pertaining to his creature (April 25), and at this price peace was concluded. The treaty was published in Florence, May 26.¹ Piero had no reason to be dissatisfied. He had lost no ground, but had triumphed over his victims, who were destined henceforth to live a hopeless life abroad.² Quite recently (February 28) he had bought of Luigi de Campofregoso, for 37,000 florins,³ Sarzana and its fortress, Sarzanell, as well as Castelnovo of Lunigiana, places situated upon the roads to Genoa and the valley of Taro, much frequented by Lombard invaders.⁴ But a nightmare pursued him, as it had pursued Cosimo. Greedy of popularity, he wanted to grasp Lucca, the eternal and misleading mirage that filled him with despair, as it did all of his family.

Failing in popularity, at least, he would be redoubtable. He was less bloodthirsty than has been stated, but still fond enough of blood. He had Papi Orlandi's son beheaded upon the charge of wishing to give up Pescia to the exiles.⁵ Out of sixteen citizens who, pressed, we are told, by the exiles, conspired to open to them the gates of Castiglionchio, upon the territory of Marradi, fifteen were seized and executed.⁶ The

¹ Morelli, *Del.*, xix. 184; Alam. Rinuccini, p. 111. Ammirato (xxiii. 104) confuses the publication and the conclusion. For these facts see as well *Ist. Bresc.*, xxi. 910; Malipieri, *Ann. Ven., Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., vii. 236; Pigna, l. viii. p. 742, 743, 747.

² Dietisalvi retreated to Ferrara, where the Duke Borso d'Este supplied his wants. Soderini lived for many years at Ravenna upon the small pension the Venetians allowed him, and died there (Machiavelli, viii. 110 B).

³ Alam. Rinuccini, p. 110; Morelli, *Del.*, xix. p. 184, give this figure. Ammirato (xxiii. 104) reduces it to thirty thousand.

⁴ Sarzana had been yielded up in fief to the Fregosi, November 2, 1421, by a treaty concluded between the Republic of Genoa and the Duchy of Milan. See Morelli, *Del.*, xix. 184; *Ricordi di Lorenzo*, Roscoe, *Life*, &c., Append., xii. p. 96.

⁵ May-June, 1468; Ammirato, xxiii. 104.

⁶ September-October, 1468; *ibid.*

following year two of the Nardi were executed, charged with attempting to take possession of Prato.¹ To imagine conspiracies and strike down those incriminated is a way to prevent real ones and to satisfy both cupidity and hate. In the old families, henceforth divided, a few, anxious for their lives, saved themselves by flight; they were declared rebels, that is, given up to their enemies, and ruined by confiscation.² One of the fundamental principles in the politics of the Medici was unceasing and unscrupulous persecution, in every form and in every degree.³ We cannot say that Piero was irresponsible because of the gout that kept him often out of Florence upon a bed of suffering, since he was able to return upon a litter the moment he found his power in danger. His villas of Careggi and Cafaggiolo were near at hand. And then it is not necessary to get out of bed and stand upright to give orders. Piero may have ignored certain abuses and certain excesses in detail, but he was always the soul of the government. His sons were too young to replace him.

Not that he made no effort to ripen Lorenzo, his most promising son. He sent him at the age of eighteen to the courts of princes, to Bologna, Ferrara, Milan, Rome, Naples, and even Venice.⁴ From afar he followed him with advice, and kept him acquainted with the affairs of the day, often soliciting his opinion.⁵ So much care was not thrown away. The praises of King Ferrante were probably only Italian compliments,⁶ like those in which Nicodemo shamelessly deluged

¹ Machiavelli, vii. 112 B. The eulogies of Guicciardini (*Op. ined.*, iii. 24), who praises "his facile and clement nature, in whom everything inclined to good, who only punished when necessity urged, and often more than he wished," prove that the celebrated historian had words and legends for occasions.

² March-April 1468. See the names in Ammirato, xxiii. 104.

³ Morelli, *Del.*, xix. 184-185.

⁴ On Lorenzo's start, see Reumont, *Lor. de' Medici*, l. ii. c. 2 and 4, vol. i. p. 211, 261.

⁵ See several of Piero's letters to Lorenzo in Fabroni, *Vita Laur.*, Doc., p. 47-53. G. Capponi (ii. 96) gives two quotations from these letters.

⁶ "Con quanta prudentia, virilità e animo vi siate portato in la reformatione del novo reggimento. . . . congratulomene etiam al populo fior., che habia si notabile

the brainless Galeaz, but everything leads us to believe that already to a certain extent they were deserved. Gentile d'Urbino and the Greek Argyropoulos were Lorenzo's first masters. His mother, Lucrezia Tornabuoni, without being precisely a literary woman, was something of a poet; she has left some religious poetry, and Lorenzo, formed in her school, composed love-songs at a very young age. At twenty he was married to Clarissa Orsini, the daughter of a Roman prince.¹ This was a mistake, for the Florentines should have been flattered at a time when they were being transformed into subjects, and in their narrow patriotism they disliked foreign wives for their masters. They swallowed the pill, thanks to the brilliant jousts in Lorenzo's honour;² but in marrying Piero to a Florentine it is incontestable that Cosimo showed a juster conception of the situation and of his own interests.

Only in the art of war, so neglected by a nation of merchants, had Lorenzo's education been forgotten. Perhaps his father regretted it, for in his latter days he was full of fear of the future. To reassure himself, he bethought at a late hour of recalling the exiles; he sent for Angelo Acciajuoli while at Cafaggiolo, and spoke with him at length upon the state of their common country.³ What his design was no one can say. In any case he had not the time to accomplish it. His days were counted. On the 1st December 1469, Lorenzo announced the approaching death of his father to the

difensore de la sua libertà" (D. Ferrante to Lorenzo, September 28, 1466, in Fabroni, *Vita Laur.*, Doc., p. 38).

¹ June 4, 1469. "Io tolsi Donna Clarice, ovvero mi fu data" (*Ricordi di Lor.*, in Roscoe, *Life*, &c., Append. 12, vol. iii. p. 96). See on this marriage *Tre Lettere di Lucrezia Tornabuoni a Piero de' Medici ed altre Lettere di vari Concernenti al Matrimonio di Lorenzo il Magnifico con Clarice Orsini*, published from MS. in the Archives Flor. by Ces. Guasti, Flor., 1859, and on Clarissa, Reumont, l. ii. c. 4, vol. i. p. 270 sq.

² These jousts cost 10,000 florins *Ric. di Lor.*, Roscoe, *loc. cit.*, vol. iii. p. 97; Morelli, *Del.*, xix. 185. Luca Pulci celebrated these exploits with the minute care of a biographer rather than the art of a poet.

³ Machiavelli, vii. III B; G. Capponi, ii. 96, who misquotes Vespasiano. The fact of the interview at Cafaggiolo is mentioned in a footnote in this *Life* that was published by the *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., vol. iv. part 1, p. 358, note 1.

young Duke of Milan. "You," he wrote to him, "who in the past have ever supported our state and greatness, deign in the present to take *me* under your protection for *my* safety."¹ By this we see that, if his sorrow prevented him from remembering a brother whose rights of inheritance equalled his own, if we ignore those of primogeniture, it did not prevent him from remembering his own personal interests. On the next day, December 2, Piero died.² He left behind him for his contemporaries an indifferent memory, which withheld him from all comparison with his father. For posterity it is still less by comparison with his son.

Of a certainty it is not his shabby government that can claim from history indulgence for the rule of the Medici. The best that can be said in Piero's favour is that he did not overthrow the edifice that abler hands than his had built. But what would he have done had he enjoyed health to live and rule longer? This nobody can say. His apologists allege, in spite of wind and tide, that under him matters became simplified; and as the most ardent of them add that they were so in a degree scarcely favourable, it is difficult to learn upon what basis they make the assertion that Florence was not then unhappy.³ Perhaps she was not sensibly worse off than in the past, since she had lost the feeling of liberty, and we know that sick people are relieved when they are turned upon their bed of suffering. All the same, fresh miseries were added to the old ones rather than replaced

¹ "Pregarla che come per il passato sempre (V. Ill. Sign.) é stata fautrice dello stato et grandezza nostra, cosi al presente voglia pigliare la protectione et conservatione mia" (Lorenzo to Galeaz, December 1, 1469).

² This date is given by Lorenzo himself in his *Ricordi* (Roscoe, *loc. cit.*, p. 97), and confirmed by two documents published by M. Guasti, *Lettere di una Gentild.*, p. 607, 610, and as well by Rinuccini, p. 112. The date commonly accepted is the 3rd (Reumont, i. 209; Cipolla, p. 560; Ammirato, xxiii. 106). That of the 13th, given by Morelli (*Del.*, xix. 185), is perhaps a printer's error. Upon Piero's funeral see one of Marco Parenti's letters in *Lettere di una Gentild.*, p. 607. On December 4, Lorenzo and Giuliano wrote to Galeaz to announce to him their father's death (Buser, *Append.*, p. 442).

³ See Leo, l. vii. c. 4, vol. ii. p. 226.

them ; violence was complicated by perfidy, and civil hatreds by prevarication—prevarication, not, as of old, in the shade, but henceforth in open daylight. From all ages, gold had ever been one of the gods of Florence ; thanks to the Medici, it became her chief deity. Even the worship of arts and letters yielded to the worship of the golden calf. That this family of merchants should have presided at the miserable evolution, and have hastened and completed it, is not the least of posterity's complaints against it.

CHAPTER II.

LORENZO DE' MEDICIS—THE CONSPIRACY OF THE PAZZI.

1469—1478.

Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici succeed their father—Their authority is recognised at a meeting of the principal citizens (December 2, 1469)—Outside adhesion—Galeaz Maria in Florence (March 15, 1471)—Lorenzo's character—His peaceful policy—Attempt at a rising in Prato (April 6, 1470)—Difference with Volterra (1472)—Rising of the people of Volterra (April 26)—Campaign against them (May)—Their submission (June 18)—Pillage of Volterra—Unsatisfactory relations with Sixtus IV.—The affairs of Imola and Città di Castello (1474)—Home policy—Creation of the *accoppiatori* (July 3, 1471)—Attempted *coup d'état*—Creation of a permanent *balie* (November 1471)—Altering the offices—Squandering of the public funds—Hypocritical despotism of Lorenzo—Conspiracy of the Pazzi (1477)—Its formation in Rome—The Pazzi—Misunderstanding between them and the Medici—The Archbishop Salviati—Jacopo de' Pazzi inveigled into the plot—Their exterior support—Assassination (April 26, 1478)—Salviati's attempt upon the palace—Defeat without fighting—The punishments—Lorenzo's increased power.

THE two sons that Piero left¹ were too young to assert themselves in a town that would not hear of the word hereditary. Lorenzo was only twenty-one, and Giuliano sixteen. Would men of ripe years submit to the yoke of two children? It was hardly to be believed, and the general attitude was an expectation of a change in the State.² Lorenzo's first proof of cleverness was the dissimulation of his uneasiness: even before his father had breathed his last, he declared to the Milanese ambassador, Filippo Sacramoro, that he had settled everything with the chief citizens, and that he felt himself well in the saddle. An assertion meant to deceive, for he had called for armed help from Parma and Bologna, and had promised not to bear him-

¹ Piero had four sons and three daughters, two of which he had married. See *Ricordi di Lorenzo*, in Fabroni, *Vita Laur.*, Doc., p. 9. On Lorenzo's start, see Reumont, l. ii. c. 2, vol. i. p. 211-213.

² "Dubitossi non partorisce novità o scandolo nella città" (Alam. Rinuccini, p. 112).

self so insolently as his father had done. But this promise he did not keep, for from the very start he assumed his father's manners, saying "that he would not allow any one to place a foot upon his throat."¹

It is none the less true that the succession of Lorenzo and Giuliano to Piero, as Piero had succeeded Cosimo, was, in the eyes of the Florentines, a "novelty" and a "scandal." To secure the acceptance of this novelty hardly novel, and this scandal already tolerated, the connivance of the most important citizens was needed, and notably that of Tommaso Soderini, whose age, talents, and services placed him in the front rank.² He might have worked for his own end, but he lacked ambition and confidence. Perhaps he secretly hoped to govern both these young men, whose brother-in-law he was through his wife, Dianora Tornabuoni, or to enjoy power without responsibility.³ On the very evening of the death and burial of Piero, five or six hundred citizens, him amongst them, all the Medici's friends, met in the Church of Sant' Antonio. He spoke first, and was soon followed by Ridolfo Pandolfini. They recalled the benefits of the house of Cosimo, "who, for this reason, had been invested in the chief dignity of the land;"⁴ they pointed out the dangers of the action of the exiles, and exhorted the *popolani*, who had always enjoyed the favours of the Medici, to remain closely united under the good seed left by Cosimo and Piero.⁵ A few others, Manno, the

¹ Filippo Sacramoro to Galeaz Maria, December 1, 1469. *Arch. Sforz.*, in Buser, App., p. 443. The despatches of the successor of Nicodemo, sent to Alessandria, are generally insignificant, and relatively few.

² Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir., Op. ined.*, iii. 25; Machiavelli, vii. 112 A; Ammirato, xxiii. 106; Reumont, l. ii. c. 5, vol. i. p. 292.

³ This is Guicciardini's explanation (*ibid.*) of Tommaso's behaviour upon this occasion.

⁴ Niccolò Roberti to Duke Borso d'Este, December 4, 1469. *Atti e memorie delle RR. deputazioni di Storia patria per le provincie modenesi e parmensi*, vol. i. p. 250.

⁵ Marco Parenti's letter, December 3, 1496, in *Lettere di una Gentild.*, p. 609. Cf. Guicciardini (*loc. cit.*, p. 24-25), who does not know if the meeting took place the same day or the day after. Machiavelli (vii. 112 A.) makes a graver error in

absent Luca Pitti's son-in-law, Giannozzo Pitti, and Domenico Martelli added "that it was necessary to recognise a superior lord, who would treat all matters concerning the state of this high signory."¹ Finally the veil was torn asunder, and all fiction destroyed.

The enemies of the Medici laughed at this convention, which had no importance in their eyes.² They believed that in a few days all business would be brought back to the public palace, but watchful diplomacy, on the contrary, thought that Lorenzo, "holding in his hands the government and the bourses, would conduct the bark to whatever port he wished, seeing that, according to the philosopher, *principium est plus quam dimidium totius.*"³ This was accurate foresight. However numerous the adversaries were—and Tommaso Soderini, after his decisive step, seemed to add to the number, such was his impenetrable reserve and silence⁴—Panurge's sheep were far more numerous, and these were carried away by the resolutions of the convention, and by the irresistible impulsion that flung all Italy at the feet of her chance masters. No one took the initiative; there was no desire, as of old, to take part in public life. Agnolo Pandolfini describes political life as a life of "insults, envy, disdain, and suspicion."⁵ Every moment spared from the cares of trade was devoted to the joys of wealth, letters, and arts, and these give the importance which was once the privilege belonging to public office. As for the lower classes, which could not aspire to wealth, broken by defeat and degraded by contempt, they only asked to live by their work: they were avenged by the prevailing power of a family who the date, and makes Lorenzo speak at the meeting, who was not there. See Ammirato, xxiii. 106.

¹ Niccolò Roberti to Duke Borso d'Este, Florence, December 4, 1469. *Atti e mem.*, i. 250.

² "Fu una cerimonia e stimasi atto di poco pondo. . . . Il che non seguito" (Alam. Rinuccini, p. 112).

³ N. Roberti, *loc. cit.*, p. 250.

⁴ Fil. Sacramoro to Galeaz Maria, Florence, May 4, 1476. *Arch. Sforz.*, Orig., 1592, f. 74; and in Buser, App., p. 456.

⁵ In his *Trattato del governo della famiglia*, p. 21, ed. of Venice, 1841.

could be open-handed, and whose rule, all said and done, was for them less harsh than that of the oligarchy.

Two days after the convention, those who flung themselves into slavery with closed eyes invited "the chiefs of the State," as they began to call them,¹ to take care of it after their father and grandfather. The good apostle Lorenzo declared that "he resigned himself to the task unwillingly, and only for the sake of his friends, to preserve their wealth; for in Florence it is difficult for the wealthy to live without the protection of the State."² He pretended to resign himself to be master, and he played the game with general acquiescence.

There was even less ado made abroad. Adhesion was unanimous. Venice herself, the last of the important Republics, had to yield hers. The rulers of Italy sent ambassadors with letters of condolence, of congratulation, and protestations of friendship and devotion. Foreign monarchs and princes followed their example. Louis XI., who in May 1465 granted Piero the privilege of adding three *fleurs-de-lis* to his arms, and pronounced himself honoured in their acceptance by his fair cousin,³ complimented Lorenzo in a flattering missive,⁴ and, naming him his chamberlain and councillor, granted him honours, city freedoms, pensions, and the emoluments belonging to these offices.⁵ With his nearer neighbour, the Duke of Milan, everything presaged neighbourly and friendly relations. During his father's lifetime, Lorenzo had gone in his stead to Lombardy, to stand sponsor for Galeaz Maria's eldest son

¹ Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir., Op. ined.*, iii. 34.

² "Perchè a Firenze si può mal vivere ricco senza lo Stato" (*Ric. di Lor.*, in Fabroni, Doc., p. 42; and Roscoe, *Life, &c.*, Append., iii. 97). Concerning Lorenzo's different relations, see Reumont, *Lorenzo il Magnifico*, l. ii. c. 3, vol. i. p. 232-260.

³ Fabroni, Doc., p. 117. "Mio bello cusino Piero di Cosimo si he degnato farmi honore grande cum acceptare le arme mie" (Louis XI.'s words to the ambassador Panigarola, who reported them to Galeaz Maria, October 8, 1466, in Buser, Append., p. 436).

⁴ June 8, in Buser, Append., p. 445.

⁵ "Consiliarium et cambellanum nostrum ad honores, præeminentias, libertates, vadia, pensiones et alia jura, utilitates et emolumenta consueta retinimus ac retinemus" (Letter of August 10, 1470, Fabroni, Doc., p. 119).

(1469), and on this occasion gave proof of the luxurious taste, not yet a personal habit, but soon to become one, which posterity wrongly connects with his surname of "the Magnificent." This has quite another and a perfectly trivial meaning, having also been borne by his father and grandfather, and by many generations of ancestors.¹ He presented the Duchess with a collar of gold and diamonds, worth three thousand ducats, which won from Galeaz the naïve assertion that he wanted no other godfather for the rest of his children.² Piero, who still lived, would have chosen a less expensive gift for one who was not an ambassador;³ but this is another proof of the truth of the proverb, "A miserly father, a prodigal son."

But the young Duke would not let himself be eclipsed in prodigality and politeness. He came to Florence with his wife Bonne of Savoy (March 15, 1471). Twelve cars covered with cloth of gold were transported on mule-back over the steeps of the Apennines, which at that time had no carriage roads. Fifty hacks followed, hand-led, for the Duchess's use, and fifty horses, richly caparisoned, for the Duke's use. The body-guard of the princely couple consisted of a hundred cavaliers and a hundred foot-soldiers, fifty armed retainers, clothed in cloth of silver and silk—in all 2000 men at least, without counting 500 couples of dogs for the chase, and a large number

¹ We may not doubt that posterity quibbled with the word. In the despatches of the times Cosimo and Piero were constantly called *vestra magnificentia*. See above all Nicodemo's letters. Even in Sweden this very common title was given to simple senators. See Agardh, *La Suède*, trans. by Mille. R. du Puget, Paris, undated, about 1879. Sismondi seized this point clearly. See vol. vii. p. 170, note. Reumont imagines that the title designated the high birth and position of Lorenzo. See *Garres-Gesellschaft, historisches Jahrbuch*, Bd. v. Heft 1, Munich, 1884.

² *Ric. di Lorenzo*, in Fabroni, Doc., p. 53; and Roscoe, *Life, &c.*, iii. 96, Appendix. Upon this voyage Fabroni also quotes from the private letters Lorenzo wrote his wife through Gentile Becchi d'Urbino, afterwards Bishop of Arezzo, who had been his tutor and his brother's.

³ "Tu sai che mal volentieri decti licentia a Lorenzo per molti respecti et maxime per non fare dimostrazione di questa mandata. . . . Di a Lorenzo che non esca dello ordine in cosa alcuna, e non faccia tante melarancie, non essendo imbasciadore, ch'io non determino che paperi menino a bere l'ochè" (Letter of Piero to his wife, Careggi, July 13, *Arch. Medic.*).

of falcons and greyhounds. This stupid display cost 200,000 golden florins.¹ With half the sum, Sismondi writes, the island of Negroponte might have been defended, and saved from falling into the hands of the Turks, as it did a few months later.²

A guest of the Medici, Galeaz was introduced to a splendour more dainty and refined than his own or that of Milan: sculptures and paintings of renowned masters living in Florence, antique masterpieces gathered at great expense in Italy and in Greece, which he confidently admired less for their beauty than for their value. The Cisalpines in his suite were equally astonished by the private houses, of old so simple, in which they were billeted at the expense of the town. They were entertained with three sacred "representations" in the shape of mystery plays: in the Church of San Felice, the Annunciation was given; at the *Carmine*, the Ascension; at San Spirito, the Descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, a feast celebrated there every year. On this occasion a fire broke out the day after that involved the rebuilding of the edifice, and was the cause of the introduction of the exquisite elegance that to-day is so much admired. This accident dispersed the superstitious Lombards; they went away two days afterwards.³ The Florentines, like them, recognised in it a sign of celestial anger against their guests, against this Northern race, so emasculated that it shocked even Florentine effeminacy, so corrupt that it shamed their corruption, and so irreligious that in Lent it observed no fasts.⁴ A sceptical but church-going people was scandalised.

Its new chief, on the contrary, was indifferent. Pagan to

¹ Ant. de Ripalta, *Ann. Placent.*, xx. 929; Tommasi, *Sommario della Storia di Lucca*, Flor., 1847, p. 336; L. Pulci, *Lettere*, March 19, p. 51, Naples; Annirato, xxiii. 108; Corio, part vi. c. 2, vol. iii. p. 260; Reumont, l. ii. c. 6, vol. i. p. 315.

² Sismondi, vii. 50.

³ Alam. Rinuccini, 115-116; Machiavelli, vii. 113 B; Ammirato, xxiii. p. 108.

⁴ Machiavelli, vii. 113 B. Sismondi has singular ideas upon Florence. He seems to imagine that this passing invasion of the Lombards corrupted a town hitherto virtuous.

the marrow, his heart was given to the things of this world, and to his own interests. For the moment he had no fear of his brother's rivalry, who was young, soft-hearted, and wholly given up to pleasure; but he felt himself too young to commence master at once. With the qualities of a politician and a chief of State, he preserved the modest appearance which had succeeded so well with his two predecessors. He said that much listening to the advice of others and taking it into account was adding their brains to one's own.¹ Thus he took counsel with Tommaso Soderini, Giovanni Canigiani, Antonio Pucci, Luigi Guicciardini, Matteo Palmieri, and Paolo Minerbetti.² But he consulted them privately and apart; and to his important advisers, upheld by numerous followers, he preferred the more modest ones, whom he could contradict and worry without unpleasant consequences.³ Already he was resolved to rely on himself; his deference was only a pretence, a relic of atavism from which he soon freed himself.⁴

What sort of young man was this before whom degraded Florence bowed? Nature had not made him to captivate. Tall, broad-shouldered, ugly, and dark-visaged, with a disproportionately large mouth and a narrow nose, hardly with the sense of smell, rough-voiced, and so near-sighted as to be nearly blind. His bearing may have been majestic, but he made it common by his exuberant gestures, and did not mend it by his magnificent clothes.⁵ Mentally he was versatile and

¹ Nic. Valori, *Laurentii Medicei Vita*, p. 15, Flor., 1740, work dedicated to Leo X. The author, disciple of Marsilio Ficino, was a member of the Platonic Academy.

² G. Capponi, ii. 98; Sismondí, vii. 48.

³ After Tommaso Soderini, Lorenzo himself names, as the most trustworthy, Antonio Pucci, Bernardo Bonhieronimo, Roberto Leone, Hieronymo Morelli, "quali havea per certi fidatissimi et de bon judicio" (Fil. Sacramoro to Galeaz, Flor., May 4, 1476, Orig., 1592, f. 74). Concerning Soderini, we have seen above he was only assured later (p. 268).

⁴ M. Bruto, l. vii., in Burmann, viii. part 1, col. 143; Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir.*, c. 4, *Op. ined.*, iii. 34.

⁵ Nic. Valori, *Laur. Med. Vita*, p. 15; Bart. Cerretani, *Storia*, l. iii. Ranke has published long extracts to his work entitled *Savonarola und die florentinische Republik*, in his *Historische-biographische Studien*, Leipzig, 1877, p. 335 sq.

eager, drawn by education to literary study, to erudition and poetry. He shared his grandfather's zeal in hunting and acquiring manuscripts, and he was filled with joy by the discovery of a portrait of Plato that he, upon questionable grounds, regarded as authentic.¹

He was too much of a lover of the arts of peace to care for those of war, and here he thought and felt as did his compatriots and contemporaries. Niccolò Bendedei, orator of Ferrara in Florence, wrote these significant words to Ercole d'Este in 1474: "There is so much leisure in Italy, that for want of incidents you'll have us writing upon the battles of dogs and birds instead of the battles of men, and I fervently believe that the glory of those who govern Italy so peacefully will not be less than that of those who were warlike."² In the year 1466 the Florentine Signory wrote to Louis XI. to acquaint him with their sorrow upon the death of Francesco Sforza, and protested their unanimous desire for peace, and their intention to crush whoever should trouble it.³ When, in 1470, the Cardinal of Rouen wrote to Pier Francesco de' Medicis, that if the war continued the fault would lie with the Florentines,⁴ it was because, so far off, it was impossible to guess the real intentions of Lorenzo; but there was no mistaking for the close observers; in this respect he would not be an obstacle to the general wish. It is true, war was necessary against the Turks, who, from Constantinople, their latest conquest, after that of Negroponte, had advanced to the borders of Albania, where they were a permanent menace to Italy; but neither Florence, which was absorbed in the establishment of a new power, nor Genoa, which had just lost

¹ Nic. Valori, *Laur. Med. Vita*, p. 18.

² Desp. of January 22, 1474. *Atti e mem.*, i. 251.

³ "Summus pontifex, Rex neapolitanus, ceteri principes et populi Italiae paci student, et vim omnem turbatoribus minantur quietudinis tranquillitatisque Italiae" (April 8, 1466, in Desjardins, i. 137).

⁴ "Fu scritto per il Card. Roano a Pietro Francesco de' Medici, come, non seguendo la pace, non è cagione, altro che Fiorentini" (Nic. Roberti to Alberto d'Este, Florence, March 24, 1470, *Atti e mem.*, i. 251).

her possessions in the Levant, nor the King of Naples, who was content with placing himself on the defensive, although more directly threatened than any one, nor yet the Pope, who should have set the example, supported Venice in this struggle, in which her mercantile interest had involved her.¹ It might well be said that Christianity no longer existed.

Each one thought of himself. Providing against possible dangers, Piero de' Medicis had negotiated with Louis XI. for French assistance.² When Piero died, Louis sought Lorenzo's friendship, and even his mediation in betrothing the Dauphin, then four years old, to Don Ferrante's eldest daughter. Willingly would he have yielded to this prince the pretensions of the House of Anjou to Naples in exchange for a substantial support against the House of Aragon, and for this important affair he wanted a Florentine ambassador at his court who would only communicate with himself.³ He wheedled the Republic by granting it reparation for commercial damage to the extent of 29,626 crowns;⁴ but Naples was not to be wheedled: she feigned repugnance to make war upon her uncle of Aragon; at heart she dreaded the aggrandisement of France, allied with all the Italian states except Venice.⁵ As for Lorenzo, he laughed at the threats of Charles the Bold;⁶ but he did not laugh at the suggestion of an expedition of Louis XI. and the Duke of Burgundy against Galeaz, a fantastical nightmare, of which he was reassured at last by the

¹ See Sismondi, vii. 65.

² Instructions to Francesco Nori, March 1476, in Desjardins, i. 147.

³ "Hunc vellemus præmonitum ne alicui se committat ex magnatibus et dominis de sanguine nostro, sed nobis tantum" (Louis XI. to Lorenzo, June 19, 1473, in Desjardins, i. 161, and Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 66). In this letter we first scent the intention, carried out in 1476, to abandon René. Concluding, Louis begs a dog of Lorenzo. We know that this king filled his court with dogs. See Chastellain, quoted by Desjardins, p. 163, n. 1. There are only fragments of this author published here and there. See Biogr. Hœfer-Didot.

⁴ Letters of Louis XI., April 20, 1475, in Buser, *Append.*, p. 452.

⁵ Letters of D. Ferrando to Lorenzo, August 9, 1473, in Desjardins, i. 163, and Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 68.

⁶ Charles the Bold to the Florentines, December 7, 1473, in Buser, *App.*, p. 448.

thoughtless character of the Duke, and by what he called "the King's cowardice."¹ He had still more serious reasons for confidence. Without prejudicing the general league concluded at Lodi in 1454, and renewed in 1471, a private league between Florence, Milan, and Venice was formed to consolidate the stability of Italy (November 1474).² The Florentines cared little for this agreement, but they did not oppose it, because, framed for the future, it exacted no immediate sacrifice. Besides, Lorenzo would have made short work of their opposition. His own interest lay in the peace outside, which circumstances assured him.³ This left him time to look nearer home into the state of Tuscany: the exiles and the subjects of the Republic were not yet quieted.

Although henceforth perfectly harmless, the intrigues of the exiles continued to keep the Medici upon the alert. On April 6, 1470, pushed by poverty and the miseries of a homeless life, Bernardo Nardi, son of Andrea Nardi, Gonfalonier of Justice in 1446, banished in 1466, had profited by the local discontent at Prato and its understanding with the Panciatichi to attempt to raise the cry, "Long live the people of Florence and liberty!" If he could hold the place for fifteen days, Dietisalvi Neroni promised him aid from Bologna and Ferrara. But the plot was so thin that a single man of action was able to explode it. Giorgio Ginori, a Florentine and knight of Rhodes, with a handful of compatriots then at Prato, restored order without even waiting for reinforcement. Bernardo, already a prisoner, was carried to Florence and beheaded. Out of the thirty conspirators who had stirred up this feeble scuffle, eighteen paid for it with their lives. This severity was unex-

¹ "La viltà del Re da uno canto et il grande e poco considerato animo di Borgogna me ne fanno dubitare". (Lorenzo to J. Guicciardini, at Milan, May 2-4, 1476. *Arch. Sforz.*, Orig., 1592, f. 74; and Buser, App., p. 452).

² Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir.*, c. 3, *Op. ined.*, iii. 32; Ammirato, xxiii. 113. See Cipolla, p. 572 *et seq.*, on general affairs of Italy of the time.

³ In six years, Ammirato, so minute in all foreign matters, has only material to fill four pages. See xxiii. 111-114.

amplified. Decidedly the Medici usurped their reputation for clemency.¹

Much more serious upon another ground, and redounding much less to their honour, was the affair of Volterra. The Florentines feigned surprise, as if a bolt had been shot from the summer blue;² but they lied, according to their habit. Their project for a long time had been to reduce the Volterrans to the state of subjects. The occasion was wanting; Lorenzo created it, or perfidiously seized it. The disgraceful preliminaries were long enough; honest Morelli declared that he preferred not to speak of them.³

Benuccio Capacci of Sienna had obtained in Volterra, always mistress of her internal government,⁴ the ground-lease of an alum-mine situated at Castelnuovo in Maremma. The un-hoped-for profits made him fear that he would be forced to give up the ground, or pay a much larger rent.⁵ Out of five associates, he took three Florentines to assure himself, as well as increased capital—a valuable protection.⁶ Lorenzo was anxious to have a share in this lucrative business. As part of his inheritance, he already owned the alum-mines of La Tolfa, also in the territory of Volterra: Piero had obtained them from Pope Sixtus IV. at the time of his elevation.⁷ Joined to those of Castelnuovo, they defied competition, secured a monopoly,

¹ Alam. Rinuccini, p. 112; M. Bruto, l. v., in Burmann, viii. part 1, p. 107; Nerli, l. iii. p. 53; Ammirato, xxiii. 107; Carlo Livi, *Tumulto di Bernardo Nardi* in the *Calendario Pratese*, 1846; Reumont, l. ii. c. 7, vol. i. p. 331.

² "Repentina res volaterrana fuit" (Letter to Louis XI., July 30, 1472, in Desjardins, i. 160).

³ Morelli, *Del.*, xix. 189.

⁴ See Ant. Ivani on this government, *De Bello Volaterrano*, R.I.S., xxiii. 6. "Suis legibus vivunt. . ."

⁵ "Egli arieno voluto l'utile in comune loro che venne in privati cittadini qui della città" (Morelli, *Del.*, xix. 189).

⁶ The names of these Florentines are in Cecina, *Notizie di Volterra*, p. 235.

⁷ "Non so quello harete eseguito dipoi circa la depositaria dello allume, la quale son contento che accepti in mio nome" (Piero to Lorenzo, March 22, 1466, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 50.) "Desiderando Lorenzo di ottenerle per se" (Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir.*, c. 3, *Op. ined.*, vol. iii. p. 29). Cf. Tabarrani's notes to a Chronicle of Volterra, *Arch. Stor.*, Append., iii. 331.

and rendered their owner master of the price of alum. Did the wily Medicis stir up the difference between Volterra and the shareholders? This was suspected, though not proved. At any rate, he received a part of the profits,¹ and he had the good fortune, doubtless arranged beforehand, to be accepted as arbitrator. He had no scruple in pronouncing in favour of the Florentine treasury (January 8, 1472), for was not Florence the real lord of the soil, since Volterra was under her protection?²

But the protected Volterrans regarded themselves as free, having only consented to receive in their midst a podesta or captain, and to pay an annual tribute of a thousand florins. They rejected the arbitrary decision, and even withdrew the concession. The captain, Bernardo Corbinelli, tried to calm the growing agitation by sending to Florence a few of the leaders. In vain: the negotiations set going between the two towns were ineffectual. At the end of their patience, the Volterrans rose up to put to death one of their compatriots, one of the shareholders, Paolo Inghirami, a violent man, and named a council of six citizens to govern (April 26). This was only a straw-fire, which was extinguished as by a bucket of water by the news that Lorenzo, and behind him the Florentines, were very angry. An embassy was sent off with humble offers of submission.

In Florence, the moderate party, led by Tommaso Soderini,

¹ "Benedetto Riccobaldi et Paolo Inghirami non volendo esser d'accordo con la loro comunità di Volterra, s'accostarono a Lorenzo . . . e questo messono per compagno e parziale del guadagno di detta lumiera" (Notes of Zaccharia Zacchi of Volterra, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 62). Lorenzo's name does not appear in the contract in which are named the members of the company, but Zacchi is an authority, and nothing is more probable than dissimulation. We can see how the beginning of the conflict is presented by Stan. Gatteschi, trans. by Bruto, l. 6, vol. ii. p. 190, *Flor.*, 1838, 2 vol. in 4. The source from which this author draws, is the confession of Montesecco, which the translator gives in a note (p. 190). Being "delle scuole pie," he endeavours to exculpate the Pope from all complication (notes, p. 188, 196, 199). He seems to understand the text that he reads.

² There is a provision "quidquid pertinebat ad com. Volaterrarum et præsertim alumen, æs, sulphur, salina et omne id quod foditur transiisse sub gubernatione et mero et mixto imperio com. Flor" (In Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 63).

counselled the preference of "a profitless agreement to an expensive victory."¹ Lorenzo would not consent. His personal interests were engaged; he took a high hand, offered humiliating conditions, exacted a formal demand of pardon and the death of the two criminals. It was too much. Volterra at once broke away, and turned to the enemies of her enemy for help. She believed she could count upon the Florentine exiles from Sienna and Venice,² upon all the Italian princes except Galeaz,³ and even on the King of Naples, who was dissatisfied by a recent step of the Florentines towards Piombino.⁴ As for the Pope, he openly espoused Lorenzo's cause, and sent him some horses.⁵

This was only a petty war. Lorenzo pressed on as vigorously as if it had been a great one; the enterprise was easy, and his pocket depended on it. The Ten of War were doubled, and in the twenty named were included the principal citizens: Luca Pitti, Antonio Pucci, Tommaso Soderini, Roberto Leoni, Giovanni Canigiani—all followers and friends of the master—and the master himself.⁶ The sum of a hundred thousand florins was voted, which was raised upon the *monte*.⁷ Federigo of Montefeltro was in command of the army. He was old, but considered clever, being besides in the pay of the King of Naples. If the King of Naples gave him up, it was a

¹ Machiavelli, vii. 114 A.

² "Questo successo (the last defeat of the Volterrans) ha dispiaciuto alla signoria, perche continuando la guerra tra Volterra e Firenze, se poteva sollevar qualche novità in quella terra, e fuorusciti alcuni da Volterra saria entrati in Firenze" (Malipiero in *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., vii. 238); Ivani, *De Bello Volat.*, R.I.S., xxiii. 15; *Cron. Volt.*, in *Arch. Stor.*, App. iii. 330; Alam. Rinuccini, p. 116; Cipolla, p. 564.

³ Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir.*, c. 3, *Op. ined.*, iii. 29.

⁴ March 1471; Alam. Rinuccini, p. 116.

⁵ Vespasiano, *Vita di Federico, Duca d'Urbino*, c. 12, *Spicil. Rom.*, i. 109. Malipieri enters even into details tending to establish that D. Ferrando must have acted underhandedly in favour of the Florentines (*Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., vol. vii. p. 238. Cf. Luca Landucci, *Diario*, p. 11, 12).

⁶ Ammirato, xxiii. 110.

⁷ Letter of Lorenzo without date, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 62; Al. Rinuccini, p. 120.

sign that the rebels had nothing to expect from the south (May 10). Lorenzo, on the contrary, expected reinforcements from the Duke of Milan as well as the Pope,¹ and even Louis XI., who promised *sumptibus nostris* ;² but he did not wait for them.

On the 20th of May, thanks to the forces spread over the territory of Pisa, Montefeltro became master of all the castles upon the Volterran territory without drawing his sword. Reinforced by the auxiliaries of Lombardy and Rome, he soon laid siege to the rebel town. Communication with the besieged was still free; but nobody came to their assistance, not even their neighbour Sienna, whom Donato Acciajuoli severely ordered to remain neutral, and even in Volterra the party of peace gained the upper hand. Composed of men of low condition, the party of war had to rely on the adventurers in its pay, and these, uninterested in the strife, became insolent to those who paid them badly, and who, in a short time, could not pay them at all. On the 18th of June Volterra surrendered,³ on condition that life and property should be respected. She was none the less sacked; her churches were pillaged, her citizens imprisoned, and her women dishonoured. Nothing could restrain the unbridled army.⁴

It was just to grant a compensation to this people, defeated, despoiled, and outraged. The Florentines had shown mercy to their ancestors two hundred years before, when their town had been attacked; but everything now was changed. Liberty was suppressed. From the rank of ally, unfortunate

¹ Letter to Louis XI., July 1, in Desjardins, i. 159.

² Letter of Louis XI. to the Florentines, June 30, *ibid.*, i. 158.

³ The 16th according to Morelli (*Del.*, xix. 189), and the 17th according to Rinuccini (p. 120). The date of the 18th is given by a Volterran contemporary, Zaccheria Zacchi, cited by Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 62.

⁴ Lorenzo's perfidy was regarded as the cause of this pillage. His interest was, on the contrary, to receive Volterra entire and rich as before the rebellion. This was recognised by Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir.*, c. 3, *Op. ined.*, iii. 30. Luca Landucci (*Diario*, p. 12) says that it was a Venetian constable who first cried pillage, and that he thus influenced the army. The Venetian and a Siennese were hung by order of Count d'Urbino.

Volterra was reduced to that of subject, and a fortress was constructed upon the site of the episcopal palace, which was razed for the purpose.¹ After the execution Lorenzo went to visit his victims. What he may have done to heal the wounds, the responsibility of which lay with him, we cannot say; but this we know, that nine months after the sack of Volterra, the Volterranean Antonio Inghirami wrote to thank the magnificent conqueror for his visit, letting us see in his courtier phrases the sad condition of his country.²

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 This facile and odious success rendered Lorenzo popular in Florence, and strengthened his power without proving that he was a great politician, and we must admit that his other actions at this time give no more proof of it. Thus he was not able to continue the friendly relations with Sixtus IV. which had been established before that friar sat in St. Peter's chair. It was at Santa Croce in Florence that Francesco de la Rovere³ was elected General of his Order in 1467.⁴ In September 1471 Lorenzo was one of the six ambassadors sent to congratulate him on his elevation, and bring back as a reward the title of Depository of the Apostolic Chamber, as well as

¹ See on these facts Ant. Ivani (R.I.S., xxiii. 5-20); *Cron. Volt. (Arch. Stor., App., iii. 330)*; Vespasiano, *Vita di Federigo, Duca d'Urbino*, c. 13, 14 (*Spicil. Rom.*, i. 109-112); Al. Rinuccini, p. 120; Guicciardini, c. 3 (*Op. ined.*, iii. 29); Machiavelli, vii. 114; Ammirato, xxiii. 111; Cecina, *Notizie di Volterra*, p. 235-240; Reumont, l. ii. c. 7, vol. i. p. 338. We must read with caution the two first authors quoted. Ivani de Sarzane, chancellor of Volterra since 1446, was in the pay of Florence. He accuses the Volterrans. See Préf. of Muratori. Moreover, he was a prevaricator. A provision of October 1471, cited by Cecina (p. 238), mentions "falsitates et fraudes quæ factæ fuerant in actis cancellariæ communis." These frauds should be judged advisedly. *Chron. Volt.*, published by Tabarrini in the *Arch. Stor.*, glides over the pillage, and ascribes it to the bad organisation of the *balie*, declaring that it had taken place in spite of the Florentine commissions, and adds nothing to Ivani.

² Letter of March 10, 1473, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 63.

³ The Della Rovere were a branch of the ancient family of Roure, originally of Vienna, and who, after having established themselves at Gevaudan and at Vivarais in the twelfth century, had passed into Italy. We must not confound them with the Piedmont family of the same name, which is more illustrious.

⁴ See the *Ricordi* of Rinuccini, p. 73 and 107, on the two general chapters of the order held in 1449 and 1467 at Santa Croce.

some beautiful antique sculptures. "He had gained a treasure."¹ Meanwhile, his uncle, Giovanni Tornabuoni, and other Florentines living in Rome to watch over the interests of the Medici, had made good bargains in buying from Sixtus IV. for a song the jewels paid so dearly for by Paul II.² These friendly relations were well known, for Louis XI. addressed himself to Lorenzo to beg the Pope not to release the Duke de Berri, his brother, from the oath of allegiance.³

Overwhelmed with benefits, Lorenzo was still unsatisfied. It was his ambition to obtain for his brother Giuliano a cardinal's hat, which, by paving an ecclesiastical way for this associate and possible rival in civil power, would have freed the lay brother from all fear, have increased the glory of their house, and in Church matters have broadened the policy of the Medici.⁴ But he did not know how to flatter the Pope, and neglected his dominant passion, nepotism. The nephews and sons of Sixtus IV., who were supposed to have been his favourites or the children of his incest, and perhaps were,⁵ found no favour with Lorenzo. One of them, Girolamo, become Count by his marriage with an illegitimate daughter of Galeaz, made the Pope buy for him the Signory of Inola⁶ from Taddeo Manfredi of Faenza, which Lorenzo hoped to attach

¹ *Ricordi de Lorenzo*, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 57. "Lorenzo, tra gli altri benefizi che ha ricevuti da S. B. ha guadagnato con quella un tesoro" (Instructions of the Ward to Ant. Crivelli, sent to the king, D. Ferrando). There is no date, but this document is subsequent to the affair of Città di Castello, of which we will treat farther on. This document, taken from the library of Gino Capponi, has been published by him in Append. ii. of his second volume. The passage quoted is on p. 508.

² Nic. Valori, *Vita Laurentii*, p. 20.

³ "Pour ce que avons esté adverty que estes bien amy de notre saint Père" (Letter of August 20, in Desjardins, i. 155). The year is missing. M. Desjardins believed that it was 1470; but in another note of the same page he says that the Pope was then Sixtus IV., who was elected only in 1471.

⁴ The demand is in one of Lorenzo's letters to the Pope, November 21, 1472. See Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 61. In two letters to Lorenzo, of April 25 and May 15, 1473, Jacopo Ammanati, Cardinal of Pavia, a true courtier, discourses the chances of the candidateship and the means of terminating it with Lorenzo. See Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 58-61.

⁵ See Sismondi, vii. 57.

⁶ Burselli, *Ann. Bonon.*, R.I.S., xxiii. 901; *Vite Rom. Pontif.*, vol. iii. part 2,

to the Florentine territory. Vexed by this competition, Lorenzo would not give in. He tried to prevent his compatriot, the merchant Francesco de' Pazzi, now established at Rome, from offering himself as a guarantee for the price of the sale.¹ At a blow he made himself three implacable enemies.

In hostilities, as in everything else, it is the first step that costs; the others are made by impulse or logic. The aggressor imagines he is avenging himself, and excellent reasons are found for a bad policy. The relations between Rome and Florence easily increased in venom, and one difficulty seemed to lead to another. Sixtus IV. wanted to bring back the rebel pontifical towns to obedience to the Church. One of his nephews, Cardinal Giuliano de la Rovere, charged with the mission, and already conqueror at Todi and Spoleta, where he had given proof of the good captainship which he displayed later under the tiara, had only to besiege Città di Castello. Here the Vitelli ruled, and as they were his representatives, the Pope wanted to reduce them to an effectual subjection.² Lorenzo could not, without disquietude, see the Holy See transformed into a military power. What would become of its neighbour, Borgo San Sepolcro, if Città di Castello fell altogether into the hands of the Church? Rome, having given it up, would doubtless want it back again.

Through interest, and as if by instinct, the Medici had renewed friendly relations with Niccolò Vitelli, whom they

p. 1060. Sismondi (vi. 59-62) points out other sources. Fabroni (*Doc.*, p. 106) cites several letters from Manfredi to Lorenzo, dated from Milan, afterwards from Venice.

¹ Nic. Valori, *Vita Laurentii*, p. 21; Onofrio Panvinio, *Vita Xysti IV.*, after result of Platina, p. 319.

² G. Capponi (ii. 105) pretends that Sixtus only wanted Niccolò, the head of the family, to yield homage to the Church, and recognise his vassalship by coming in person to Rome. He tries to prove it by a document published at length in Appendix ii. of his vol. ii. p. 507. These are the instructions to Ant. Crivelli, in which we read, "Mostrare obediènza . . . saltem con il segno di venire a far riverenza a S. B." But the same document shows the pontifical exactions still more broadly: "Quod pejus est, i governatori mandati per S.S. fuerunt potius gubernati quam gubernatores (p. 507). Et perciò sta in fermo et costante proposito di voler la vera obediènza da M. Nicolò et da quella città (p. 509)."

did not fear. Piero Nasi, in their name, went to him, and secretly promised help;¹ not so secretly, however, that Sixtus IV. did not get wind of it, and was cruelly wounded thereby. Unaware of the egregious folly of counting on the gratitude of nations and princes, he could not understand this ingratitude towards himself, who had not bargained in offering help for the repression of Volterra, though it had been favoured by his predecessor, towards him who, above all, had paid all the expenses of his contingent.² He regarded the Florentines, as the Milanese, obliged by feelings of gratitude, honesty, and justice to second him in his designs,³ and deceived in his expectations, he declared them strangers to these sentiments. He had to compound with Niccolò Vitelli, and content himself with his reception of 200 pontifical soldiers (September 1, 1474), an inexcusable weakness in the eyes of the Sacred College;⁴ a relative, but to his wishes an insufficient success for Lorenzo, which in him, as in the Pope, was incapable of appeasing a resentment big with consequences. The purchase of Imola and the war of Città di Castello contained the germs of the conspiracy of the Pazzi. That the ground upon which the seed fell was well prepared to receive it we will show by casting a rapid glance on the interior life of Florence.

Solely occupied, like his father and grandfather, in strengthening his power, Lorenzo strove to suppress every vestige of liberty, though he kept up a hypocritical appearance. In May 1471, Bardo Corsi, Gonfalonier of Justice, furnished him with a pretext. The writers of the time aver that this two-months official was all for the freedom of the people, which

¹ Ammirato, xxiii. 113.

² Sixtus IV. returns twice to this point, the expedition at his expense, in the instructions to Ant. Crivelli. See G. Capponi, Append. ii. vol. iii. p. 508.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 509.

⁴ Nic. Valori, *Vita Laur.*, p. 21; Card. Papiens, *Epist.*, 570, at the end of *Comment. Pii II.*, p. 833; *Ann. Eccl.*, 1474, § 17, vol. xxix. p. 555; Litta, *Famiglia Vitelli*; Fabretti, *Capitani Venturieri dell' Umbria*; Roberto Orsi, *De Obsidione Tifernatum*, Città di Castello, 1538; Reumont, l. ii. c. 8, vol. i. p. 348.

simply means that he was hostile to the Medici. As a fact, he tried to upset their policy by binding the Republic to the King of Naples through a money loan. If the clamours of the powerful prevented him from carrying out this intention, and if he only achieved disgrace, *ammonizione*, and privation of office,¹ the very intention was a lesson for Lorenzo: nothing more was wanted than a Gonfalonier of Justice sufficiently emancipated. Without delay the new Signory was ordered to make provision for it.

The Signory was scarcely installed (July 3, 1471),² when Lorenzo induced it to propose, and the councils unanimously to agree to, the creation of five *accoppiatori*,³ a convenient office, which, not being conferred by lot, had, ever since Cosimo's return and rule, been filled by the family's creatures. It was they who named according to their liking, that is to say, their master's liking, the Lords and the Gonfalonier of Justice, and who transmitted to them, as if coming from themselves, occult but imperious orders.⁴ The *accoppiatori* on this occasion received the right to elect, at the same time with the members of the Signory, forty other citizens, who, in turn, were to name two hundred to form a *Consiglio Maggiore*, or Grand Council. Upon this assembly devolved all the powers of the Florentine people, except that of fixing the *catasto* and raising the *decima*.⁵ The opposition of the councils, the people, and the commons to an institution which dispossessed them was foreseen; it was therefore decided that, to give the force of law to this provision, the vote of the Council of the Hundred would suffice—a flagrant breach of the law, and a real *coup d'état*, which in earlier times

¹ Alam. Rinuccini, p. 117.

² G. Capponi says 1470, but this is doubtless a printer's error, because it does not agree with the other writers.

³ "E tutti a una fava" (Morelli, *Del.*, xix. 188).

⁴ "Quegli achopiatori facevano essere de' signori chi credevano faciessi a lor modo; el gonf. di giust. facevano sempre de quel numero ghovernava, e tutti e signori ubbidivano a quello nelle chose di stato" (G. Cambi, *Del.*, xxi. 2).

⁵ Alam. Rinuccini, p. 117; Morelli, *Del.*, xix. 188; Guicciardini, c. 3, *Op. ined.*, iii. p. 28; Ammirato, xxiii. 109.

would very properly have provoked an appeal to arms. So unpopular was the reform, that even in this Council of the Hundred, where none but accomplices and instruments were expected to be found, the proposal, put twice to the vote, did not secure the necessary majority of two-thirds, so that the Lords were compelled to give it up.¹ The stroke missed, but left behind it rancour and distrust, and a fermenting hate which other measures were destined to embitter and envenom.

Upon the advice of the *balie*, the Signory of September 1471 ordered the sale of the goods of the *Guelfa parte* and of the office of the *mercanzia*, to apply them to the amount of twenty thousand florins in different services.² The magistracy of the party once so powerful and dreaded were thus reduced to the care of public works.³ At a time when the popes were not more Guelph than the emperors, the Florentine people must have regarded with indifference the clipping of the nails of a powerless tyranny; though those who had the spending of the funds were transformed from friends into enemies, or at least into malcontents.

On September 20 a bolder measure reduced the fourteen minor arts to five, and confiscated the goods of those suppressed. As none of the seven major arts were suppressed, this was a manifest return to the petty merchant aristocracy. This time again public feeling ran high. It was even feared that so grave a beginning hid some more ruinous measure still against liberty, so that finally the execution of the scheme was abandoned.⁴ But distrust was awake, and it was some time before it was lulled to sleep again.

Lorenzo profited by the lesson. To the Signory of November 1471 he proposed more modest reforms, and met with a less doubtful success. As the right of naming *accoppiatori* was not disputed, by a judicious selection he could dispose

¹ G. Capponi, ii. 100.

² Morelii, *Del.*, xix. 188; Alam. Rinuccini, p. 118.

³ G. Capponi, ii. 101.

⁴ Alam. Rinuccini, p. 118.

of everything as he wished, since their mission was to substitute an enlightened choice—too enlightened perhaps—for the blind decision of the lot. He chose ten, himself of the number, from his most intimate friends, so that it was quite a family affair (November 20).¹ Until then all the ancient Gonfaloniers of Justice had competed for nomination in the Council of the Hundred; but as these were not sure men, it was decided that the forty citizens previously designed for the office² would join with only fifty of the Gonfaloniers, whom they themselves would choose. As, on the contrary, the accoppiatori were absolutely reliable, Lorenzo granted them, and in consequence himself, a perpetual balie,³—a monstrous innovation in a state that pretended to adhere still to democratic forms.

Henceforth it was Lorenzo and his faithful friends that named the members of each Signory. But it would have been no less wearisome than compromising to influence nine new Priors in person every two months, and bend them to his policy and designs. To avoid this difficulty, he endeavoured that the Gonfalonier of Justice should be the real head of the chief office, so that in future it would be only needful to communicate his wishes to this officer, whose duty it would be to transmit them to his colleagues.⁴ The Gonfalonier seemed to be responsible for everything; but nobody was mistaken.

The history of these encroachments, both audacious and underhand, must be completed. For the ancient post of captain of the people, protector of the masses, was substituted

¹ Alam. Rinuccini, p. 119.

² See above, p. 142-144.

³ "E durassi la balia loro tutta la vita" (Morelli, *Del.*, xix. 188). "Che questi stessino a vita" (G. Cambi, *Del.*, xxi. 3). Different numbers are given. Cambi speaks of thirty, then of forty citizens, and he says that the old Gonfaloniers could join on to the seventy; but Rinuccini seems to be the decisive authority, for he declares that he was member of the *balie*. See Al. Rinuccini, p. 117; G. Gambi, *Del.*, xxi. 3; Ammirato, xxiii. 109. This latter does not agree with Rinuccini upon the dates of the month. He places the creation of the *accoppiatori* in November 1471, and the reduction of the twenty Arts in January 1474.

⁴ Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir.*, c. 3, *Op. ined.*, iii. 27, and Ammirato, xxxii. 112.

the much less important office of an ordinary judge.¹ The podesta shrank more and more before the Eight of Guard, without any provision being necessary, simply by force of habit and the master's encouragement. The Eight, whose original duty had been to hunt out crimes and offences, had already received from Cosimo, in 1434, "*balie* of blood:" they took proceedings, judged, condemned, and left nothing to the pitiable podesta but an imperious order to ratify and promulgate the sentences pronounced by them.² The podesta escaped the captain's suppression; but of these two ancient pillars of the state, the remaining one was no longer a support, had no longer a voice. He was not even an object of derision, as in Boccaccio's time, and instead of replacing him every six months, he was left a year in office. As for the Executioner of Justice, once a magistrate and an important one too, he became a simple *bargello*, that is, an executioner in the narrow and common sense of the word.³

There remained the councils. The Council of the Hundred was modified in its composition by the *accoppiatori*, since it had just disappointed the master's hopes and shown itself unmanageable. Once purified, it received the right to deliberate upon all petitions relative to the public interest without reference to the councils of the people and the commons, which were thus annulled⁴ rather than suppressed. Other

¹ Al. Rinuccini, p. 126.

² See the formula of the phrases: "Magnifici octoviri custodiæ et balie civ. Flor. in numero sufficienti collegialiter congregati, intellecto et recepto qualiter. . . . Et idcirco habito super predictis omnibus et singulis sano et maturo consilio, &c., deliberaverunt, scribunt, commitunt, imponunt et mandant vobis presentibus Domino Potestati dictæ civ. Flor. quatenus vigore presentis deliberationis ac commissionis et bulletini, per vestram sententiam declaretis, pronuntietis et sententietis dictos. . . ." (*Sentenze pubblicate tra i documenti di corredo all' edizione de commentario della congiura dei Pazzi per Angiolo Poliziano*, in G. Capponi, ii. 108, n. 2).

³ Morelli, *Del.*, xix. 190; Al. Rinuccini, p. 121.

⁴ Al. Rinuccini, p. 117. This writer is a decided authority, for he was a member of the *balie*, which proves that, with Lorenzo and his friends in great majority, a small minority of friends of a sect easily made enemies were allowed to enter it.

councils and offices disappeared, or were in a like way reduced in their attributes. Amongst them the famous *mercanzia*. The purpose was to concentrate all things, even a knowledge of private affairs, as far as possible in the hands of the Signory. As for the *contado*, to rule it, which was essential, and not very difficult, it sufficed to institute a special *bargello*, whose term of office, at first four, then six months, ended by lasting much longer.¹

Henceforth, all offices that were not abolished were weakened and degraded. Even the Signory was but a vain show. The serious action took place behind the scenes, in the secret meetings of the ten *accoppiatori*, one of whom was Lorenzo. The new mechanism was based upon a cleverly conceived reciprocity: the *balie* and its endurance rested with the Medici, who only had to lift their hand for it to drop into nothingness. In return, the Medici received from these subordinate powers the tacit authorisation to draw from the public treasury in their private interests, and to make good the void by taxes that easily became exactions. They could diminish these taxes for their favourites, or allow them for what had not yet been paid, lower the interest of the credit inscribed in the book of the *monte*, raise the wine-tax, create new taxes to pay the interests, and, which seems still more exorbitant, extort fresh sums by fines from those who, having once been sentenced, had committed no new offence. All this was done without accounting to any one. It was arbitrary and disguised despotism with all its monstrous abuses. A hundred thousand florins went to save the banking-house at Bruges, managed for Lorenzo by Tommaso de' Portinari, from bankruptcy, "and the poor town paid everything," writes honest Cambi.² Nor was this the only time the public treasury helped to straighten the embarrassments of Lorenzo; for he continued the mercantile operations of his ancestors, without

¹ Al. Rinuccini, p. 126.

² G. Cambi, *Del.*, xxi. 3.

giving his time to them as they had done, without previous initiation into the principles and rules of trade and its delicate and complicated management.¹ He wanted the profits, but relied upon the labour of others. Not that he was idle, but his occupations were of another kind; he was busy with diplomacy and politics. It was by his personal tastes, and not by his position, that he differed from his predecessors.

Guicciardini is wrong in stating that Lorenzo began at this time to wish to be the master.² Like Piero and Cosimo, he was master already, but he did not follow their example and screen the fact. He openly favoured men of no worth, asserting that had his father done likewise, he would not have run the risk of losing the State in 1466.³ He obstinately kept the big families, whose return might overshadow him, in exile,⁴ under the pretext of intimidating the homicides, who, thanks to the failure of the laws,⁵ defied the relatives of their victims. The few families whose devotion he had tried, and whom he admitted to a share of the power as well as to a part of the treasury, alone supported him; men of letters, whom he flattered by calling himself one of them; painters and sculptors, whom he honoured with his praises and commissions; the people, finally, whom he amused by feasts and spectacles, and corrupted by his gold. In him the Medicean traditions were fully developed.

It pleased Angelo Poliziano, then hardly twenty, to cele-

¹ Ammirato, xxiii. 114; Sismondi, vii. 99; G. Capponi, ii. 107.

² Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir.*, c. 3, *Op. ined.*, iii. 28.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ M. Bruto, l. vi., in Burmann, viii. part 1, p. 142.

⁵ On March 16, 1478, a provision was made which stated: "Si dà comodità a chi l'omicidio commette di potere senza pena o timore alcuno essere nel conspetto, tutto il giorno, e di quegli che anno ricevuta senza grande indegnazione e perturbatione d'animo, tali homicidiali possono risguardare. E benchè le leggie del popolo fior. acrementemente vendichino e punischino tali delicti . . . nondimeno, qual se ne sia la cagione, o la troppa humanità, che veramente più tosto crudeltà chiamar si debbe, o il disordinato amore, non si osservano tali ordini e onest e giustissimi" (see text in Luca Landucci, *Diario*, p. 16, note 2).

brate the repose which Florence at that time enjoyed, in spite of the anger of Sixtus IV.;¹ but only men already broken to servitude could accommodate themselves to a government founded upon contempt of human dignity, upon the pleasure of a single person eternally master, thanks to the *balie* he had made permanent, and quick to condemn, without personal responsibility or legal process, those whom he suspected through caprice or distrust. Most of his contemporaries, and the worthiest, Rinuccini, Morelli, and Cambi after them, speak bitterly of this system of rule, which was not even justified by war, since the peace had not been broken for ten years.² Serious writers, the first voices of posterity, spoke afterwards in the same spirit. The sagacious Guicciardini saw clearly, and makes us see, how odious was the domination of the Medici. Fiery Michele Bruto condemns it like a passionate enemy, and for this reason it has been the fashion to discredit him as an authority. But can we contest that of the Genoese Antonio Galli? Secretary of the office of San Giorgio at Genoa,³ he wrote twenty or twenty-five years after this period. He neither saw the question too closely nor too distantly, yet was far enough from it to perceive the large lines, which are more favourable to Lorenzo than the mean and wretched details; and he was perfectly exempt from the local hatreds and jealousies

¹ " Fiorenza lieta in pace si riposa,
Nè teme il vento o' l minacciar del cielo,
Nè giove irato in vista più crucciosa " (Stanze vi.)

See G. Capponi, ii. 107, n. 3, on the date of this poem.

² Excepting the insignificant affair of Prato and that of Volterra, peace was only troubled, under Lorenzo, by the attacks of Carlo Fortebraccio of Montone, bastard of the famous captain, upon Sienna. As the two Republics hardly ever agreed (see Fil. Sacramoro to Galeaz, November 8, 1477, Orig., 1598, f. 128), Florence was accused of underhandly pushing these attacks: " Ciò mandavano ogni dì una buona lettera e il conte Carlo ogni dì una cavalcata " (Allegretti, R.I.S., xxiii. 782, May-June, 1477). Cf. Malavolti, part iii. l. 3, f. 72 v°; Machiavelli, viii. 119 A. Reumont (l. ii. c. 9, vol. i. p. 371-374) quotes a letter of the Pope, taken from the archives of Urbino. Sienna's revenge was to contract a close alliance with Naples and the Pope, which permitted them to keep troops upon the Florentine frontiers. September 27, 1477, Montone was taken from Carlo, " whose wool was shorn " (Allegretti, xxiii. 783).

³ See Muratori's preface to Ant. Galli., R.I.S., xxiii.

that trouble judgment. These are his words: "The town of Florence was held by the all-powerful Lorenzo under the appearance of liberty. He was considered scarcely inferior to the princes of Italy, and yet hardly differed from his fellow-citizens in his way of living. He had innumerable followers, immense territorial possessions, and vast flocks. Everything about him exceeded the measure of that which constitutes a private individual. Nobody who displeased him was allowed to live in the town."¹ To rule by proscription, even to the very last of his enemies, was to put arms into the hands of those who, having offended, had nothing else to look to. There was no need, in order to curse and strive to shake off this yoke, to regret liberty.

Henceforth conspiracy had its theory, which it found in the ancient authors. Between insurrection and assassination there was no middle term; a choice must be made. Both were tried by the Greeks and Romans, and each had succeeded more than once. Their imitation even, the fruit of erudition, had not always failed. But upon this point, and in recent times, the balance was not always equal between the two methods. Stefano Porcaro in Rome (1453), Girolamo Gentile in Genoa (June 1476), Niccolò d'Este in Ferrara (Sep. 1476),² had attempted insurrections as futile as those of Prato and Volterra; while in Milan, in December of the same year, assassination had accomplished its fell design. Excited by Cola Montana, a professor of letters, who was exalted by an old-fashioned patriotism, as well as embittered by personal rancour, three gentlemen stabbed Galeaz Maria in the church where he was hearing mass. They paid with their lives for their success, as others had for their failure;³ but from the distance, bloodshed and executions do not inspire terror, and none felt discouraged. Not content with pitying the murderers, they extolled them. Thus writes Rinuccini, speaking of Galeaz's murder: "It was a praise-

¹ Ant. Galli., *De rebus genuens.*, R.I.S., xxiii. 282.

² See Sismondi, vi. 267-275, vii. 77, 83.

³ See Cipolla, p. 577, on Galeaz's death, indicating the source.

worthy and manly enterprise, which should be undertaken by every one living under a tyrant, or a master resembling a tyrant; but the cowardice of men accustomed to bear the yoke rendered the example of little or no effect.”¹ Here the allusion to Florence is evident, though not seditious (for these *Ricordi* were not for publication), and of slight foundation, since only Galeaz’s uncle profited by his death; it is the more significant in consequence as a proof of the state of mind of the Florentines. Assassination could succeed, as was just seen, upon the possible forfeiture of one’s life. As a piece of policy, Lorenzo and his brother went about openly unarmed and unprotected. Besides, one always hopes to take precautions and escape punishment. In this erudite century it was forgotten that Brutus’s dagger had not prevented the triumph of Antony—a Cæsar without genius. The Medici’s flatterers would be the first, Lorenzo and Giuliano once dead, to curse their tyranny and memory, for the brothers were not regarded, as Galeaz in Milan, as legitimate masters. There was, then, a plausible chance of success, and, as a fact, never was a conspiracy better prepared than the one about to break out.

→ It was plotted in Rome among two very distinct parties—Romans and Florentines. Nothing was less rare in the Eternal City than deadly enemies of the new masters of Florence. Sixtus IV. led the choir. He had not forgotten the league with the North, nor the help given to Niccolò Vitelli, nor Lorenzo’s intrigues to prevent Girolamo Riario, his favourite son, from getting Imola and to exhaust his sources of wealth. On his side, Riario did not renounce the idea of cutting himself out a godly principality in Romagna, and he saw an obstacle in Lorenzo, and in case of success an enemy, a near enemy, and a possible despoiler when once the tiara should pass to another head. On the contrary, if Florence, with timely aid, were given her freedom and accepted new masters, she might become a solid support on a

¹ Alam. Rinuccini, *Ricordi*, p. 125.

Pazzi
conspiracy

basis of reciprocity. Already the Pope's great friend, the King of Naples, was advancing towards Sienna with his army. Let the Medici once disappear, and the Florentine alliance with Milan, Venice, and France be broken, he could cross the frontier and dictate laws to the people who had so often made sport of the house of Anjou.¹

The other element was the exiles, a constant source of perplexity to the Medici. To please these latter, on April 6, 1470, Louis XI. loudly disowned his ambassador at Rome, whose only fault was to have visited the defeated, and promised his efforts to procure their recall.² Other discontented Florentines lived in Rome with them, and necessarily became more or less mixed up in the affair; and amongst them was the wealthy merchant Francesco de' Pazzi. Of a restless, passionate, and ambitious nature, this little man, whose frail appearance gained him the name of Franceschino, was unmarried, and neither at home nor in trade found employment for his eager activity;³ connected, besides, with the Pope's son, and opposed by Lorenzo in his lucrative banking operations,⁴ he cherished hatred for his country's oppressor, and against this oppressor's family he had besides a standing grievance which must be recalled.

The Pazzi family belonged to the ancient nobility of the *Contado*, which its defeat had confined to Florence, and compelled to live under the terrible law of the ordinance of justice.⁵

¹ *Diarium Parmense*, R.I.S., xxii. 277. The anonymous writer of this chronicle, prudent and honest, to judge from his language, begins in 1477 and finishes in 1481. He is thus a real contemporary.

² See Louis XI.'s letter in Desjardins, i. 152.

³ Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir.*, c. 4, *Op. ined.*, iii. 35. See his portrait in Politien, *Conjuratiōnis Commentarium*, 1478, f. I v^o.

⁴ See below, p. 296.

⁵ Litta, who dedicates ten of his pictures to the Pazzi, will not have these ancient Guelphs, come from Fiesole, confounded with the Pazzi of the Val d'Arno, also noble, but Ghibellines. This party difference proves little. There was a Ghibelline and a Guelph branch of the Guidi; both sprang from the same root. The Fiesolan origin, as Litta himself acknowledges (*Tav.* 1), was often only a boast of these country squires to prove themselves of Roman origin, and it is certain that the Pazzi cherished this pretension, since they profited in establishing it by the discovery in San Firenze of an inscription which names a certain M. Paccius (*ibid.*).

But instead of imitating so many petty aristocrats, who, too noble to do anything, were classed among the *Scioperati* or idlers, they gave themselves up to trade, acquired immense wealth, and won a place amongst the merchants, which would have been greater still but for the haughty arrogance that belonged to their race. Their disgrace ended in 1434 upon Cosimo's return, who, to strengthen himself, made considerable advances to those oppressed by the democracy and the merchant oligarchy—to the ancient nobility. The Pazzi, more far-seeing than their fellows, did not refuse to belong to the people, since, at the price of a certain coldness on the part of the upper class, they obtained the right by this change of state to aspire to offices, and, in the event of obtaining them, a means of increasing their opulence, the principal object of their ambition. Thus it was that little by little they became perhaps the richest of the Florentine families. They traded all over Italy, and great was their renown.¹

The first among them who sat in the Signory was Andrea de' Pazzi (1439). He received King René in his house most sumptuously, and became his firm friend. Two of his five sons² were raised to the supreme dignity of Gonfalonier of Justice: Piero in May 1462,³ Jacopo in June 1469. This dignity was for Piero a reward upon his return from the solemn embassy sent to Louis XI. to congratulate him upon his coronation (October 20, 1461). He had taken part as a third with Filippo de' Medicis, Archbishop of Pisa, and Buonaccorso of Luca Pitti. Inclined to company and pleasure, to display and extravagance, he kept open house, and ruined himself in copyists, books, and miniatures. He was quite of his time. Upon the death of his father he had run through twelve thousand florins, of which there was nothing to be seen, and for this reason his inheritance consisted in lands less

¹ Guicciardini, c. 4, *Op. ined.*, iii. 34.

² He had as well three daughters. See Litta, *Tav.* 7.

³ And not 1461, as Ammirato states (xxiv. 116).

easily to dissipate.¹ It is probable that he had hopes of glory and of realised ambition. In March of the following year he refused to enter Florence with his two colleagues—he entered alone the next day on horseback. All the knights, doctors, principal citizens and important foreigners of the town² went to meet him as far as the gates; accompanied him first to the palace of the Signory, where he received the people's banner, then to his own house, which was crowded with visitors.³ Was he a formidable rival of the Medici? Alessandra Macinghi did not think so. "All that," she wrote, "meant little. In Florence manifestation and action are often two different things. Remember, my opinion is, that whoever is on the side of the Medici is well off. With the Pazzi it is quite the contrary, as they are always beaten."⁴ They fought an obscure battle, upon which history is silent. By these judicious words we see that the misunderstanding between the two families was of ancient date.

Of all the Pazzi, Piero was regarded as the most discreet and reserved.⁵ Thus Cosimo, although he did not regard him as a sure friend,⁶ married his grand-daughter, Bianca, to Guglielmo de' Pazzi, Antonio's son and Piero's nephew, an alliance which meant for the family exemption from all

¹ Vespasiano, *Vita di Piero de' Pazzi*, c. 1, 2, 6, *Spicil. Rom.*, i. 485, 490; life published also in the *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., vol. iv. part 1, p. 363. Cf. Burckhardt, *Die Cultur der Renaissance*, vol. i. p. 259. This author reports a curious anecdote of Piero's youth, reproduced in an article of M. Müntz, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, November 1, 1881, p. 171. It is very clear that the Medici were not alone in Florence in their taste for letters and arts.

² Notably the brother and son of the Marquis of Mantua, as well as Nicodemo de Pontremoli.

³ Letters of March 15, 1462, *Lettere di una Gentild.*, p. 255, 261.

⁴ Letter of Alessandra Macinghi, *ibid.*, p. 255, 256.

⁵ "Era d'altra discrezione che non era ignuno di quella casa" (Vespasiano, *loc. cit.*, c. 2, *Spicil. Rom.*, i. 487).

⁶ Wishing to open secret negotiations with Sforza, Cosimo recommended Nicodemo not to speak of it to any one, especially not to Piero: "Guarda non ne scrivere al signore, nè ne partecipare cum persona der Dio . . . et non voglio che M. Piero de' Pazzi el senta" (Nicod. to Sforza, March 24, 1462, in Buser, *Appen.*, p. 414).

taxes.¹ How did this man of letters, this clever spendthrift, displease the people? The fact is, that of all the Pazzi, the only one that Florence liked was one of his nineteen children, Renato, who appears to have inherited his brains; but neither the father nor the son ever became heads of the family. The chief was Jacopo, Andrea's eldest son, described as a gambler and a blasphemer.² He had figured in the solemn *balie* created for the enterprise of Volterra.³ He was not treated as an enemy either. Two letters which he addressed to Lorenzo show that, whatever their feelings at heart may have been, they still strove to save appearances.⁴

But the affair of Imola⁵ upset matters. For this enterprise Sixtus IV. wanted money, and could not ask it of Lorenzo, his depositary, since it was opposed to his interests. There was no other resource for him then but to apply to his treasurer, Franceschino de' Pazzi, Antonio's son and Andrea's grandson.⁶ Now Lorenzo had begged Franceschino not to advance the funds. Too good a banker to lose an opportunity of gain, and too little the Medici's friend to please them at his own loss, Pazzi advanced thirty thousand ducats. He even went further; he told the Pope of the refusal Lorenzo had exacted from him. This was throwing oil upon the flame; on the spot Lorenzo lost the lucrative office of depositary, and, through the fault of one man, all the Pazzi became his enemies, and were pursued and overwhelmed with annoyances.⁷ Franceschino was ordered to return to Florence to defend himself from the accusations brought against him; in other terms, to put his head in the lion's mouth.⁸ Giovanni,

¹ Vespasiano, *loc. cit.*, c. 2; *Spicil. Rom.*, i. 486.

² Politien, *Conjur. Comment.*, f. 1 r^o; Guicciardini, c. 4; *Op. ined.*, iii. 34.

³ Ammirato, xxiv. 119.

⁴ Jacopo overwhelmed him with praise to obtain a reduction of taxes, December 21 and 23, 1474, Avignon, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 103, 105.

⁵ See above, same chap., p. 282.

⁶ Litta, *Tav.*, 7; Ammirato, xxiv. 116. Antonio had two other sons, Giovanni and Guglielmo.

⁷ Guicciardini, c. 4, *Op. ined.*, iii. 35.

⁸ M. Bruto, l. vi., in Burmann, viii. part i. p. 142.

his brother, who was in their power, felt the weight of a heavy hand. Before his eyes was the prospect of fabulous wealth, through his wife, only daughter of the wealthy Giovanni Borromei. A decree was passed that in case of death ab intestat, the nephew of every deceased should have prior right of inheritance over a daughter, and as the decree was passed for an individual, it was shamelessly made retrospective in his case. By this means Carlo Borromei, a creature of the Medici, inherited all the fortune of a man who, dying before this perfidious Act was passed, naturally had not thought of making a will in favour of his only child. The iniquity was so enormous, that Giuliano, more prudent than his brother, though younger, wanted to prevent it, but he did not succeed. Lorenzo's hate was implacable, and nothing remained for those whom it pursued but, in accordance with the ideas of the time, to get rid of him.¹

The soul of the conspiracy was the ardent Franceschino. Residing in Rome, he enjoyed freedom of speech and action. He was in relations with Count Girolamo Riario, whom he had more than once helped pecuniarily, and who feared that, at the Pope's death, Lorenzo would rob him of Romagna.² He also met one of his compatriots, as determined an enemy of the new masters as himself, Francesco Salviati, whose family, distrusted by them, had been proscribed for their pleasure.³ This heaven-sent colleague was made Archbishop of Pisa by Sixtus IV. upon the death of Filippo de' Medici, since he could not make him Archbishop of Florence. For the see of Florence Lorenzo had chosen one of his wife's relatives, Rinaldo Orsini, and, less fortunate regarding the see of Pisa, he nevertheless deferred the investiture for three years. One evil measure inevitably

¹ Nardi, l. i. vol. i. p. 23; M. Bruto, l. vi., in Burm., viii. part i: p. 142; Guicciardini, c. 4, *Op. ined.*, iii. 36; Machiavelli, viii. 117 B; Ammirato, xxiv. 116. Nardi adds that this law of circumstance was again in vigour in his time.

² Nic. Valori, *Vita Laur.*, p. 22; Guicciardini, *loc. cit.*, p. 36.

³ Jacopo Salviati had been declared a rebel by Cosimo's will (Ammirato, xxiv. 116).

leads to another, as there is no reason to spare a man once he has been made an enemy. Such is the law of human passions. Salviati finished by taking possession of Pisa; but whether he distrusted his sacred position, which was but a doubtful protection, or whether he took a merely mercenary interest in his diocese, he spent most of his time in Rome.¹

Between these three personages the preliminaries of the conspiracy were conducted throughout the year 1477. It was first necessary to win over the head of the family of the Pazzi, old Jacopo,² and that was no easy thing: "he was colder than ice"³ to the proposal. "It is madness," he said, "to try to become masters of Florence. I know better than they; do not speak to me of it again."⁴ His nephew Renato, the strong mind of the family, represented on his side that Lorenzo's private affairs were so compromised that bankruptcy was at hand, and that in losing fortune and credit he would also lose his undue influence in the State.⁵ But what conspirators have ever been able to wait? To convince Jacopo, it was necessary to assure him of certain, or at least probable success. Franceschino despatched to him Gian Battista of Montesecco, a condottiere devoted to Girolamo Riario, who consented to enter into the plot. The Pope, regarding Lorenzo as a great scoundrel, gave his consent provided there was no murder.⁶ And

¹ Politien, *Conjur. Comment.*, f. 1 v^o; Guicciardini, c. 4, *Op. ined.*, iii. 36; Machiavelli, viii. 117 A; Ammirato, xxiv. 116. Politien makes a hideous portrait of this prelate, even physically; he accredits him with all the vices, but we need not believe the word of a man so blindly devoted to Lorenzo. Cf. Reumont, l. ii. c. 9, and l. iii. c. 1, vol. i. p. 368, 384, 398.

² "Come haviamo lui, la cosa è spacciata" (words of the Archbishop Salviati to G. B. de Montesecco, one of the sworn members, in the confession of the latter, published by Politien at the end of his Commentary, and by Fabroni, Roscoe, and finally G. Capponi, proof of the importance of this document in the eyes of all historians). We quote from the text of Capponi, which we have under our eyes. See vol. ii. p. 512, App. 3. Its authenticity has been contested, but it does not seem doubtful. On Montesecco, see Reumont, l. iii. c. 1, vol. i. p. 387.

³ Words of Montesecco, *ibid.* Cf. Guicciardini, *loc. cit.*, p. 36.

⁴ Words of Jacopo to Montesecco, *ibid.*, p. 514.

⁵ Guicciardini, c. 4, *Op. ined.*, iii. p. 41.

⁶ Confession of Montesecco, *ibid.*, p. 512, 514.

when his nephew Girolamo told him that they intended to avoid bloodshed, but that if it proved necessary they hoped he would pardon them, "You are a fool," he replied. "I have said that I want nobody's death." At the same time, dismissing the three conspirators, he gave them his benediction, and promised them the support of an armed troop, or anything else that was necessary.¹ Such language, in the presence of witnesses, did not tend to discourage the assassins. Not in a position to go to war with Lorenzo, why should the Pope furnish an armed troop, if not for murder? It was to the honour of the Holy See and of Count Girolamo that they had not appeared in the matter.²

These assurances given by the officious Montesecco to Jacopo de' Pazzi convinced him no doubt; for from this time we see this gambler assisting the poor, this blasphemer making gifts to churches, paying his debts, rendering to their owners all the merchandise that he held in deposit for others;³ in a word, putting himself in order for a tragic end, and in contradiction of the past, "needing the bridle instead of the spur."⁴ Two of the Pazzi remained out of the plot: prudent Renato, who thought he was showing his disapprobation, and sufficiently covering himself from all suspicion of complicity, by remaining in his villa;⁵ and Guglielmo, Bianca de' Medici's husband, now intimate with the two brothers, the alliance with whom changed, his feelings from white to black.⁶

¹ "E con questo ci levassimo denanzi de S. S. facendo poi conclusione esser contento dare omne favore et aiuto de gente d'arme ed altro che acciò fosse necessario" (*ibid.*, p. 514). Cf. Machiavelli, viii. 118 B.

² For M. Reumont, the great affair is to exculpate the Holy See from all complicity. The Pope's words appeared convincing to him in this affair (see vol. i. p. 280). We judge it in quite an opposite way, and the *Revue Historique*, criticising M. Reumont's book, is of our opinion (see September 1884, p. 164). It is astonished to find in Reumont words attributed to the Pope which are not to be met with in the text as given by Capponi. Neither are they in Fabroni.

³ Machiavelli, viii. 121 A.

⁴ Confession, *ibid.*, p. 516.

⁵ Machiavelli, viii. 119 A.

⁶ "Guglielmo et tu con Pigello insieme habbiatene consiglio et fatene delibera-

Already the plans were decided upon. Too much bound to the Pope not to follow him, the King of Naples flattered himself besides that a revolution in Florence would render him the arbitrator in Italy, and that his troops upon the border of Sienna would advance without any obstacle as far as the Florentine frontier.¹ Under pretext of attacking Montone, and of revenging the wrong done the Siennese and the Perugians by Count Carlo, a pontifical army was to assemble in the state of Perouse. Lorenzo Giustini, of the Città di Castello, Niccolò Vitelli's rival, was to levy soldiers to hold him in check; Gianfrancesco of Tolentino, one of the condottieri of the Pope, was to pass with his troops into Romagna, while the Archbishop Salviati, Franceschino, and Montesecco were to go to Florence, either to take part in the murder or to profit by it.² At the moment the two intended victims should fall, the town would be attacked from without on both sides at once.

Montesecco arrived first with an army which he led, so it was pretended, for the enterprise of Montone. Whether Lorenzo was his dupe or not, he received him marvellously well, in quite fraternal fashion.³ It is astonishing that, with so many accomplices, the secret was kept. The accomplices of the second rank were already enrolled and initiated. The two Salviati's, one the brother and the other the cousin of the Archbishop; Giacomo, son of the historian Poggio Bracciolini, feather-brained, empty-headed, needy, and ready for anything

tion" (Piero to Lorenzo, May 4, 1465). "La brigata di Guglielmo sta benissimo" (*ibid.*, May 11, 1465). Texts in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 52, 53. In thirteen years, it is true, many changes may take place, but Politien declares that Guglielmo, like Renato, was recognised as innocent of conspiracy (*Conjur. Comm.*, f. 2^o). We do not, then, know why G. Capponi throws these doubts on the conduct of Guglielmo.

¹ Guicciardini, c. 4, *Op. ined.*, iii. 38.

² Confession, *ibid.*, p. 512, 516; Guicciardini, *ibid.*, p. 38; Machiavelli, vii. 119 A. See also the sentence of the Milanais Matteo des Toscani, podesta of Florence, from the MSS. Strozziiani, at end of the edition of the *Comment.* of Politien published at Naples in 1769 by Giovanni Adimari.

³ "Che veramente non s'averia possuto parlar per niuno fratello più amorevolmente . . . con li più amorevoli ricordi che possesse mai patre a figliulo" (*Confession*, p. 513). Cf. Reumont, l. iii. c. 1, vol. i. p. 391.

to restore his lost fortune, prepared even to forget that through the Medici's favour his father had sprung from simple schoolmaster to be secretary to the Republic ;¹ Bernardo de Bandino Baroncelli,² Napoleone Franzesi, follower of Guglielmo de' Pazzi,³ and obliged to hide himself from his patron ; also two priests, Antonio Maffei of Volterra, apostolic scribe, exasperated against Lorenzo since the sacking of his country ;⁴ Stefano of Bagnona,⁵ curate of Montemurlo, Jacopo de Pazzi's secretary, and a monster of indecency, if we must believe the indecent and untrustworthy Poliziano.⁶ The last meetings, when the time for action came, were held in the house of Jacopo de' Pazzi at Montughi, under the very walls of Florence.

The wish was to strike both brothers together ; but the difficulty was to find them together outside their houses.⁷ It was then decided that it would be wise to strike them separately, since they could not mutually help each other. Giuliano was on the point of marrying, at Piombino, the daughter of the lord of that city ; if Lorenzo could be attracted to Rome, under the pretext of reconciliation with the Pope,⁸ they would not only be separated from each other, but from the greater part of their friends. Unfortunately, a delay would be necessary, involving the risk of disclosure. It was then decided for expedition's sake to return to the first idea, and strike both at the same time.

¹ Politien, *Conjur. Comment.*, f. 2 r^o ; Ammirato, xxiv. 117.

² He is generally called Bernardo Bandini (see notably the contemporary Fil. Strozzi in G. Capponi, ii. 521, App. 4) ; but Bandino was the father's name (see Burselli, *Ann. Bonon.*, xxiii. 901). The tendency was more and more marked to turn a patronymic into a family name.

³ Politien, f. 2 r^o.

⁴ Fil. Strozzi calls him Marco Maffei (Capponi, *ibid.*).

⁵ Bagnone, in the Val di Magra, seven miles from Pontremoli, in Lunigiani. The Bagnone torrent has given its name to that locality (see Repetti, i. 249, 254).

⁶ Politien, f. 1, v^o, 2 r^o ; Machiavelli, viii. 119 A ; Ammirato, xxiv. 117.

⁷ "Res difficilis admodum videbatur quod juvenes raro simul erant, nec nisi in tuto conveniebant" (Nic. Valori, *Vita Laur.*, p. 23).

⁸ "Laudaria assai che la magnificentia vostra fesse pensiere e determinatione venir personalmente al conspecto della prefata sanctità, la quale non dubito vi vedrà volentieri" (Letter of Girolamo Riario to Lorenzo, January 15, 1478, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 106). Cf. Guicciardini, c. 4, *Op. ined.*, iii. 37).

There remained to find or provoke the opportunity. The young Raffaello Sansoni, son of one of Girolamo Riario's sisters, and hardly twenty, was studying then in the University of Pisa. By chance or calculation he received at the same time a cardinal's hat and the commission of legate at Perugia.¹ In going to his post, he naturally had to pass through Florence, and his passage would necessarily be the occasion of feasts and banquets, at which doubtless the two Medici would assist. Jacopo de' Pazzi invited them both to Montughi with the beardless cardinal-legate. Giuliano was suffering from a sore leg, and did not come. Lorenzo in his turn entertained his guest in his villa near Fiesole. For the same reason, or perhaps another, Giuliano was still absent. A third feast was to take place on Sunday, April 26, in the house where both brothers resided in Florence. On this occasion Giuliano was still absent.² In the end, their patience exhausted, the conspirators decided to strike their blow in the cathedral at high mass. Giuliano, who for the moment abstained from pleasures, would certainly not abstain from this official act of devotion. In fact, Lorenzo and he had agreed to join Cardinal Sansoni at the foot of the altar, and conduct him, after the mass, to the house.³

This arrangement being known, a signal was given to Montesecco, who arrived at once at the head of thirty archers on horseback and of fifty infantry. He admitted that he came from Imola to serve the Cardinal⁴ as escort.

¹ Account of the conspiracy by Filippo Strozzi, published first p. 55 of the volume entitled *Vita di Fil. Strozzi il Vecchio, scritta da Lorenzo, suo figlio, per cura di Gius. Bini e Pietro Bigazzi*, Florence, 1851; then by G. Capponi, vol. ii. p. 520, App. 4.

² Ant. Galli (*De rebus genuens.*, xxiii. 282) pretends even that he must have supped outside. In that case there would be undoubtedly some complaint against the young Sansoni; but it is more probable that, being convalescent, he was careful of himself. See Machiavelli, viii. 119 A, and Ammirato, xxiv. 117.

³ Nic. Valori, *Vita Laur.*, p. 23; M. Bruto, l. viii., in *Burm.*, viii. part 1, p. 148; Guicciardini, c. 4, *Op. ined.*, iii. 38; Machiavelli, viii. 119 A; Ammirato, xviv. 116.

⁴ Carlo Giovannini, *Brev. Chron.*, at the end of Politien, ed. of Naples, p. 68; Cipolla, p. 584.

The double murder was to take place at the moment when the priest, having given the communion, should pronounce these words, turning towards the congregation, "Ite, missa est."¹ At that instant, though there were still some prayers to be said, every one rose and rushed to the doors. The noise and movement that followed were favourable to violence; besides, the bells rang to warn the Archbishop Salviati and Giacomo Bracciolini to seize without delay the palace of the Signory. As for the work in the church, Franceschino de' Pazzi and Bernardo Baroncelli were to settle Giuliano. Their task was regarded as most difficult and dangerous, as this weak and timid young man usually wore armour under his garments. Montesecco was told off to strike Lorenzo, but already shaken by the kindly welcome he had received at the last moment, he shrank from the horrible sacrilege of murder upon sacred ground. He was replaced by two obscure priests of the conspiracy. It was thought that the habit of living in the church would render them more indifferent to the idea of profanation.² It was an advantage, but the habit of stabbing strengthens the hand; for such work none is so useful as a soldier or a butcher.³

Santa Maria del Fiore was crowded with Florentines. Lorenzo and the Cardinals had arrived, and mass was begun, and Giuliano did not appear. His two impatient assassins went out to join him and escort him. They told him that his

¹ The subsequent or foreign authors say at the time of the elevation, or even at the *Sanctus* (see Comines, l. vi. ch. 4, l. ii. p. 199). But Filippo Strozzi, who was present, is an authority (see G. Capponi, ii. 521). He, moreover, agrees with Nic. Valori (p. 24) and Guicciardini (p. 39).

² "Parumper hæsitatum est, cum obruncando Laurentio miles delectus, et multa emtus mercede, negaret sese in loco sacro cædem ullam perpetraturum, deinde alio negotium suscipiente, qui familiaror, utpote sacerdos, et ob id minus sacrorum metuens" (Ant. Galli, *De reb. genuens.*, xxiii. 282). The chronicler Jean Molinet (died in 1507) said twice that the priest Etienne (Stefano) said the mass (*Chron.*, ch. 61, vol. ii. p. 179 and 182, pub. in 1828 by Buchon in 5 vols.; vols. xliii. to xlvii. of the *Collection des chroniques nationales et étrangères*); but he is mistaken evidently.

³ According to Guicciardini (c. 4, *Op. ined.*, iii. 42), this substitution was the salvation of Lorenzo.

presence was necessary. On the way, as if in fun, they encircled his body with their arms to see if he wore his cuirass. Because of his sore leg, he was unarmed, without even his inseparable companion—his hunting-knife. When the officiating priest pronounced the sacramental "Ite, missa est," the two brothers rose and began to move around the choir, mixing freely with the crowd, and in consequence easy to reach and close upon.

At once Bernardo Baroncelli struck Giuliano in the breast, who, walking a few steps forward, fell upon the ground. Franceschino de' Pazzi rushed upon him, and finished him furiously.¹ At the same moment the two priests attacked Lorenzo, but one of them, Antonio Maffei, having placed his hand upon his shoulder, by this imprudence drew his attention, and the wound he inflicted was light. Rapidly Lorenzo shook himself free, wrapped his left arm in his cloak to parry the blows, and defended himself, sustained by his two followers, Antonio and Lorenzo Cavalcanti. The two priests lost courage and ground, whereupon Franceschino, although wounded, rushed in their place to face the enemy, and Bernardo Baroncelli following him, killed Francesco Nori, who barred his way.² Lorenzo had time to jump into the choir as a protection, and then to take refuge in the sacristy. Poliziano and other friends shut the bronze gates made by order of Piero de' Medicis, who little thought that they would prove the salvation of his son. Antonio Ridolfi sucked the wound and dressed it. From their shelter they heard the great uproar in the church, and the cries and the clanking of arms; but they saw nothing, and knew not of Giuliano's fate. At last somebody struck the heavy door. "Come out!" they shouted; but were they friends

¹ Machiavelli (viii. 119 B) says that Franceschino in his blind fury wounded himself grievously in the thigh; but Politien and Belfradello des Strinati (*Cronichetta*, at the end of *Storia di Semifonte*, Flor., 1753, p. 132) allow us to believe that he was wounded in the scuffle that followed.

² This Nori had been sent as ambassador to Louis XI. in March 1467. See Desjardins, i. 147.

or enemies who shouted? Was it advice given in good faith, or the injunction of madmen ready for anything? To make sure, a devoted youth rushed up the little staircase from the tribune to the organ, whence he could see into the church. He perceived Giuliano stretched in his blood, and he discovered that they were friends who were knocking at the sacristy door. After a long hour of suspense in this sacred place, the door was opened, and Lorenzo, surrounded by a large number of armed men, was conducted to his house, which was close at hand.¹

What had passed during this fortunate but stirring seclusion? In the church, most of the conspirators, seeing Giuliano fall, imagined Lorenzo was dead, and rushed outside in the direction of the palace, where the second act of the drama was to take place. The young Cardinal, for whom none showed anxiety, was dead with fright near the altar, and so terrified that he remained pale for the rest of his life. The priests of the cathedral sheltered him, and, a little later, two of the Eight conducted him under guard to the palace, where he was kept prisoner, in spite of the Pope's orders to have him given up—an impious audacity that was soon punished by a formal sentence of excommunication.²

Outside the Archbishop Salviati heard the bells which announced the end of mass, and which the bell-ringer had rung in his ordinary course without knowledge of the murder which was to take place. At once the violent prelate went to the palace, accompanied by a few friends and some Perugian exiles, thirty in all. Leaving a few of them at the entrance for security, he went in with the others, and hid them in the chancellor's office; but the latter shut the door upon themselves, and as it closed

¹ Fil. Strozzi, account in G. Capponi, ii. 251, App. 4; Politien, *Conjur. Comment.*, p. 2 v°, 3 r°; Morelli, *Del.*, xix. 193; Nerli, l. iii. p. 54; Malavolti, part iii. l. 3 f. 73 r°; Guicciardini, c. 4, *Op. ined.*, iii. 39; Machiavelli, viii. 119 B, 120 A; Ammirato, xxiv. 118; Comines, l. vi. c. 4, vol. ii. p. 198 *sg.*

² Fil. Strozzi, *loc. cit.*, p. 521; Politien, f. 3 v°; Nic. Valori, *Vita Laur.*, p. 24. *Diarium Parmense*, xxii. 277; Molinet, c. 61, vol. ii. p. 184.

with a spring, it could not be opened from within without a key that they had not. Their aid, therefore, could not be counted upon.

At that moment the Priors were at table. The Archbishop, listening to the noise from the place, which he found too slight, demanded audience of the Gonfalonier of Justice in the name of the Pope. Cesare Petrucci, who then held the gonfalon, was an insignificant creature of the Medici. Once commissary at Prato, thanks to them, he nearly perished in the petty conspiracy of Bernardo Nardi. He retained for this a certain attitude of mistrust, which served him well on this occasion. Rising from the table to receive in the audience chamber the intruder who disturbed him, his scrutinising glance detected the changes on his face, and his anxious looks towards the door. Cesare listened to his incoherent talk, and heard him cough as a signal. With a bound he was in the corridor, calling his colleagues and the *famigli* of the palace. He knocked up against Jacopo Bracciolini, whose presence he justly regarded as suspicious; he seized him by the hair, and gave him into the hands of the *famigli* who had answered his summons. With the Priors who rejoined him, he crossed the kitchen and seized the spit, with which he placed himself at the door of the tower where the Signory had retired.

All the issues were soon protected, and the conspirators were attacked separately. As soon as they captured one, he was put to death or flung alive out of the window. Upon the noise within, the conspirators without, according to watchword, seized the entrance, and having shut it upon themselves,¹ they sustained a sort of siege against the friends of the Medici, who invaded the place, and thus held them between two fires.

These friends, it is true, were not better or less perilously

¹ Politien, *Comment.*, f. 3 v°; Fil. Strozzi, *loc. cit.*, p. 521; Al. Rinuccini, p. 127; Morelli, *Del.*, xix. 193; *Diarium Parmense*, xxii. 278; Guicciardini, c. 4, p. 40; Machiavelli, viii. 120 A; Ammirato, xxiv. 118.

placed than themselves. Few in number, because it was said that the dagger which had struck Lorenzo was poisoned and his death was predicted,¹ they saw Jacopo de' Pazzi bearing down to the square from the gate *Alla Croce*, which he occupied with Montesecco. The two priestly murderers had been cut to pieces. Bernardo Baroncelli, seeing that the aim had missed, took flight outside the town. Franceschino, weakened by his wound, had retreated to his uncle's; and his eager prayers would have sufficed to induce this old man to fight with a hundred men, that Lorenzo's friends might be put to peril, if the indifferent mass, called to arms for liberty, had not turned a deaf ear to them. The Signory could only prevent the defeat of their few defenders by flinging from the windows the stones that were always kept in the palace, and which had been for many centuries their defensive artillery.

It was only after having heard the tower bell ring, and learnt that the gonfalon of justice was unfurled, that a number of roughs began to shout, "*Palle, Palle,*" without having the slightest intention of doing anything. "There was not one," Rinuccini wrote sorrowfully, "who cried *Marzocco* or anything else."² On both sides the old energy was equally lacking. Jacopo de' Pazzi soon left the party, retired to his own house, and waited for two hours to see if Heaven would not help him who had ceased to help himself; and as nothing happened, he retreated through the gate *Alla Croce*, which was always strongly occupied, and took refuge in Romagna with two hundred of his people.³ Now, if these two hundred men had joined the hundred he had brought to the place, they might perhaps have changed the face of things; but

¹ Ant. Galli, *De rebus genuens.*, xxiii. 283.

² "Marzocco" was the lion of Florence; "anything else" is evidently liberty (Al. Rinuccini, p. 128). "Eorum tamen plus initio voces quam manus pilas clamando operabantur" (Ant. Galli, *De reb. genuens.*, xxiii. 283).

³ Fil. Strozzi, *loc. cit.*, p. 522; Politien, f. 4 r°; Nic. Valori, *Vita Laur.*, p. 26; *Diarium Parmense*, xxii. 278; Ant. Galli, *De reb. genuens.*, xxiii. 282; M. Bruto, l. vi., in *Burm.*, viii. part 1, p. 152; Guicciardini, c. 4, *Op. ined.*, p. 40; Machiavelli, viii. 120 §; Luca Landucci, *Diario*, p. 18.

in a *coup-de-main* he who thinks of his own safety lacks faith in success.

When Jacopo's departure was known, the greatest poltroons became brave; they rushed in a body to the Medici's palace to offer their devotion. They demanded Lorenzo, who showed himself with his neck bound up in linen. In the public palace the gates could be opened again, and communication established between those without and those within. The Gonfalonier Petrucci, who had given an opportune proof of courage, all the more real since he knew nothing of what was going on at the cathedral, in his anger upon learning the facts, had the Archbishop Salviati, his brother, his cousin, and Jacopo Bracciolini hung from the palace windows. Of all those who had invaded him in their train, only one escaped, and he was discovered four days afterwards under a mass of wood, where he had hidden himself. He seemed sufficiently punished by fright and hunger.

This was the only merciful act in an orgie of revenge and repression. The people cut in pieces all who were described as enemies of the Medici and friends of the conspirators. Their bodies were dragged through the streets, their heads and limbs were carried on pikes, and even the sacred remains of a priest of the bishopric were not respected.¹ Franceschino, dragged out of bed, where he was ill from his wound, and forsaken by his uncle, was conducted, undressed as he was, to the town-hall, and hanged from the same window as the Archbishop. Renato, ceasing to believe himself secure in his villa, tried to escape in peasant attire. Recognised, arrested, and conducted to Florence, he was hanged in spite of his certain innocence. His no less innocent brothers were thrown into prison in Volterra. Guglielmo took refuge in the very house with Lorenzo. He owed it to his relationship that he was only condemned to relegation in the *Contado* within twenty miles and beyond five. They wanted to have him

¹ Luca Landucci, *Diario*, p. 19.

at hand. While his wife remained in Florence, he prudently flew to Rome. There, seeing him in shelter, they spared him, and gave him some hope of a return to favour.¹

The churches were less friendly asylums than Lorenzo's house; Jacopo Bracciolini's two brothers were dragged out of them and imprisoned, though one of them was a canon of the cathedral.² Galeotto de Piero de' Pazzi was found in Santa Croce dressed as a woman, and Giovanni d'Antonio in the monastery of the Angelo.³ Piero Vespucci was thrown into the *Stinche* for the sole crime of having favoured the flight of Napoleone Franzesi.⁴ Montesecco, after a curious interrogatory, which has been preserved, although he had refused to strike and had confessed—a double claim upon indulgence⁵—was beheaded. The executions continued until May 18.⁶ In a few days about a hundred persons perished, and amongst them how many innocent!⁷

Even while there were still many guilty or suspected persons to punish, victims were sought for far and wide. Jacopo de' Pazzi, arrested by the peasants of the Apennines, begged for death, and was refused it. Conducted to Florence, the favour was accorded him, with the ignominy of the gibbet (April 27). His body was buried in the family tomb, but as it rained very

¹ Lorenzo's instruction to his son Piero going to Rome in November 1484, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 268.

² Ammirato, xxiv. 119.

³ G. Capponi, ii. 118.

⁴ Al. Rinuccini, p. 128; Ammirato, xxiv. 119. This Franzesi probably died the following year, in the army of the Duke of Calabria, before Florence. See upon this fact and on the family, G. Capponi, ii. 119, 120.

⁵ May 4. See a MSS. quoted by Adimari at the end of the Commentary of Politien, ed. of Naples.

⁶ On the diverse sentences of the Eight from August 28 to May 18, see the sentences of the podesta Matteo des Toscani, at the end of Politien's Commentary, p. 136-155. Reumont (l. iii. c. 1, vol. v. p. 402) refers us for a more or less accurate list of the wounded and dead to a MS. of the Magliabechiana, appendix to the edition separate from Ammirato's account, p. 86-88.

⁷ Fil. Strozzi says eighty (in Capponi, ii. 522); Ammirato (xxiv. 119), seventy; Al. Rinuccini (p. 127), 140; Allegretti (*Diari Sanesi*, xxiii. 784), 200. Luca Landucci (*Diario*, p. 19) rates at about twenty the number of hanged the first evening, and in three days more than seventy. He continues to enumerate the executions.

heavily at that time, it was believed that the heavens were punishing the town for having buried in consecrated ground this great blasphemer, who even in dying called upon the devil. He was taken out of the sepulchre and buried under the walls (May 16). "Some children next day disinterred him a second time, dragged the body through the streets with a piece of string around his neck, then, tired of this pleasure, and not knowing what to do with the corpse, they threw it into the Arno from the Rubaconte bridge, singing an improvised song—

"Messer Jacopo giù per Arno se ne va."

"This was regarded as a great miracle, for children are afraid of the dead, and the body smelled so foully that no one could approach it. From the 27th of April to the 17th of May, think how it must have smelled! And they had to touch it with their hands in throwing it into the river. A curious crowd was gathered on the bridges to watch it float with the tide away from Florence. Another day, in the vicinity of Brozzi,¹ some other children dragged it out of the water, hanged it to a willow, beat it, and finally flung it back into the river. It was said to have passed under the bridges of Pisa."²

Thus an eye-witness writes. Another contemporary, who had seen nothing, on the contrary says that the body, thrown into the Arno, was not found again. He adds that the devil had carried it off with the soul.³

Twenty months did not soften the feelings of these conquerors who had not fought. Bernardo Baroncelli retired to Constantinople. Lorenzo's revenge pursued him there, and Mahomet II. gave up the refuge, as the chronicler Burselli naïvely says, from horror of a sacrilegious murder committed

¹ Brozzi, Florentine Val d'Arno, five miles west of Florence, between that town and Poggio a Cajano. See Repetti, i. 363.

² Luca Landucci, *Diario*, p. 21, 22.

³ *Diarium Parmense*, xxii. 279; Machiavelli (viii. 121 A) only states what is likely; Ammirato (xxiv. 120), believes like Landucci, that the corpse flowed away with the current.

in a church.¹ Bernardo was hanged from the windows of the Bargello, December 29, 1479.² In 1481 the unfortunate wretches, vaguely accused of having wished to kill Lorenzo, were killed in turn by horrible tortures.³ If the Salviati family were not entirely ruined through the fault of one member, this was because the Medici found it wise to make allies of some of them.⁴ But no pity was shown the Pazzi.

On May 22 a decree ordained that their arms be effaced from all public and private buildings, and replaced by that of the Florentine people. The place called the *Canto dei Pazzi* was forced to drop the accursed name. The chariot of the sacred fire for the feast of Holy Saturday⁵ was still preserved, as it had nothing in common with them, for, as the decree said, "it is the honour of the Pazzi, and not the ancient custom, that is to be suppressed."⁶ All the survivors of the family were bidden to change their arms and name in two months if they remained in the dominions, in six if beyond them. Whoever took a wife in the male line of Andrea de' Pazzi, or gave his daughter in marriage to one of his descendants, would, with all his descendants in male line, be *ammonito*, and for ever deprived of all office and dignity.⁷

It is hardly necessary to say that the old punishment of painting the guilty, head downwards and in grotesque attitudes, upon the walls of the towers and upon the palace of

¹ Burselli, *Ann. Bonon.*, xxiii. 902. Landucci (p. 33) says that Baroncelli was taken the 23rd of December 1479. The fury of vengeance had had ample time to satiate itself.

² *Cronachetta* de Belfradello des Strinati, at the end of the *Storia di Semifonte*, p. 133. Cf. Guicciardini, c. 4, p. 42.

³ September 27, October 15, 1480. See in Landucci (p. 36) details of the tortures from which an old hermit died, accused because he came to Poggio a Cajano to Lorenzo. Farther on we shall find other tortures, in a less hypothetical conspiracy.

⁴ G. Capponi, ii. 120.

⁵ See our vol. i. p. 111, 112.

⁶ "Ut Pactiorum decus, non mos sublatus videatur" (Decree in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 113).

⁷ Decree of May 22, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 114, 115. Cf. Fil. Strozzi, in G. Capponi, ii. 522, App. 4.

the Bargello, was not spared to the Pazzi. The painter, Sandro Botticelli, devoted to the Medici, put all his talent into it. Posterity accorded the honour to Andrea del Castagno, dead since 1457.¹ The defamatory painting was effaced afterwards, and by-and-by the people began to call the little place by the name it so long had borne, *Canto dei Pazzi*, but the Pazzi themselves never rose again.²

✱ There is no example in the history of the Florentine Republic, even in its records of extremest violence, of so implacable a vengeance. In popular commotions of olden times a few people were killed. Under a princely rule, cruelty progresses not so much in the refinement of torture as in the facility of inflicting it, and in the duration of resentment and revenge. Whoever is surprised by it cannot know the fifteenth century. As for those who regard the tyranny of a single individual the normal condition of peoples, it will not occur to them to be indignant: rebellion calls for punishment, and punishment is not bound to measure itself by the crime, since, in their eyes, the crime assumes the gigantic proportions characterised by the sinister and bloody words—high treason. Even modern historians willingly accord to princes the right of putting to death treasonable subjects. They admit that a rising of six weeks calls for and merits a six months' repression. And if one among them should regret the absence of impartiality and justice, can he flatter himself that even he is just and impartial?

As was natural, the unfortunate Giuliano received a magnificent funeral. It was known that his mistress, one of the Gorini, was *enceinte*, and her child was brought up with Lorenzo's children. He was afterwards Pope Clement VII.³

¹ See above, p. 34, n. 2. Cf. Vasari, *Andrea del Castagno*, iv. 150; Reumont, l. iii. c. 1, vol. i. p. 406; G. Capponi, ii. 120. The editors, Milanese (p. 151, n. 4, of Vasari) are not quite certain upon this point.

² "Fu spenta in pochi di una sì nobile, ricca e potente famiglia" (Al. Rinuccini, p. 128).

³ G. Capponi, ii. 121.

As for the survivor of the two intended victims, life-size statues were raised to him, with waxen face and hands. They were arrayed in garments resembling those worn by the model, and prominently placed in the church of the Santissima Annunziata, and in that of a convent in the street San Gallo. The likeness was striking. For a long time public curiosity was excited by the statues, and they still existed in Vasari's day.¹

Lorenzo de' Medicis was a lucky man. He had just escaped an almost certain death, and was rid of a brother he would have had to make away with if he had ever claimed to share the power. In his defence the people had taken up arms, and more than ever was he recognised as their chief. For his safety he was allowed the privilege of a body-guard of armed men, whose number was his own choice. The attempt of his most serious enemies shook him free of them, and furnished him with the precious opportunity, legitimate in appearance, of treating rigorously all who stood in his way. The noisy rumour of the event glorified the man who had so "providentially" escaped the dagger. Kings congratulated him and treated him as a cousin.² Thus his power increased, and, as a whole, was more secure. Henceforth his companions were subjects, the people enslaved, heredity was consolidated; upon his death, without immediate disaster and after an accidental crisis, hereditary power went through the most common and perilous ordeal, the replacing of an able and prudent prince by an idiot or a madman.³

Could the Pazzi conspiracy possibly have succeeded? It

¹ Andrea Verrocchio designed the faces, which were executed by an excellent wax-moulder named Orsini. See Vasari, *Andrea Verrocchio*, v. 152.

² Louis XI. to the Florentines upon the conspiracy, May 12, 1478, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 119, and Desjardins, i. 171.

³ In the sixteenth century Guicciardini pointed out this danger: "E spesse volte di uno savio viene in uno pazzo, che poi dà l'ultimo tuffo alla città" (*Stor. di Fir.*, c. 4, *Op. ined.*, iii. 43).

is doubtful. If it had powerful support outside, it was of a nature to render it the more unpopular at home. The conspiracy neglected to secure general favour, or at least keen intelligence, a necessary precaution; for if Lorenzo was little loved, Giuliano was very popular because of his youth, his soft and easy disposition, and his truly Florentine love of pleasure and feasts. Finally, it was a great imprudence to choose a church for murder; the multitude were not, like the priests, indifferent to the sacredness of the place, or, like the conspirators, imbued with the Pagan spirit of the Renaissance; for them the murder, so far from being venial, became a mortal sin through sacrilege.¹ To fail under such circumstances meant the complete sacrifice or the indefinite delay of success. It can be affirmed that the Pazzi contributed greatly to the strengthening of the Medici's powers.

Would the ruin of the Medici at this late hour have been for Florence's welfare? We may also be permitted to doubt it, if not to deny it altogether. Rinuccini shows little penetration when he says that the Pazzi enterprise was just and honest because its aim was to restore freedom to the country. We have said it over and over that liberty was then but an idle word, a pretext, a sort of flag for the ambitious. In face of the Medici, progressive and ill-assured usurpers, the ancient *popolani* and the old nobility, their rivals, who suffered from their disdain, their severity, and their injustice, did not so much strive to obtain greater justice as to throw off the yoke, and to place under it those who imposed it, and those who seemed destined always to bear it.² Had the Pazzi succeeded, they would have replaced the Medici, as the Medici had replaced the Albizzi. Perhaps they would have shared their power with the Salviati, until such time as they were torn asunder, when one of them would have started

¹ A few of these ideas have been judiciously indicated by G. Capponi, ii. 120.

² Rinuccini recognises this at the risk of self-contradiction; "Mostrarono avere animo virile e generoso, e non potere sopportare molte ingiurie e sdegni gli eran suti fatti da Lorenzo medesimo" (p. 128).

the same campaign that the Medici had brought to a successful issue by patience and intrigue, and the Pazzi to an unsuccessful issue by impatience and assassination. The only difference being that the new rule of an oligarchy would have delayed the definitely hereditary reign of a single head, the fatal term of evolution, in Florence as in the rest of Italy, in virtue of the laws of affinity. Was it worth while to effect a murder and attempt a revolution for a few days respite? Yes, for the families that would have gained by victory, since blood-shedding in those days was a slight matter; but not for the Florentine people, whose part now was to carry its yoke philosophically. The observer and historian see as little reason to regret the Pazzi's failure as to applaud the Medici's triumph.

CHAPTER III.

LORENZO DE' MEDICIS IN STRIFE WITH THE HOLY SEE.

1478-1480.

Lorenzo's power after the Pazzi conspiracy—Sixtus IV. excited against Florence—Florentine ambassador insulted—Florentine merchants imprisoned—Florence under interdict (June 1, 1478)—Cardinal Sansoni set free (June 12)—War upon paper—Consultation of the Florentine clergy—Negotiations with Louis XI.—Meeting of the French clergy at Orleans (September)—Relations with Venice—Pontifical army on the frontier—War declared (July 7)—Confusion in the Florentine army—Military operations—Taking of Montesansavino by the pontifical party (November 8)—French embassy in Rome (January 1479)—Armistice (April 14)—Failure and departure of the ambassadors (June 2)—Genoa freed (November 26, 1478)—Diversion of San Severino in Lunigiani (February 1479)—Incapacity and discords of the Florentine chiefs—Devastations of the enemy—Lodovico il Moro, Duke of Milan (September 8)—Discontent of the Florentines—Lorenzo's departure for Naples (December 6)—His enemies in Florence—His magnificence and negotiations in Naples—His return (March 1, 1480)—Peace promulgated (March 25)—Reform of Florentine institutions—Council of Seventy (April 8-19)—Opposition of the Florentines—New alliances—Siege and taking of Otranto by the Turks (July 28-August 11)—Florence delivered from her enemies—The interdict raised (December 3)—Lorenzo strengthened.

It is commonly believed that the failure of the Pazzi conspiracy was the origin and beginning of absolute power for the escaped victim. But to support this untenable opinion, it is necessary to forget that Lorenzo's father and grandfather had already ceased to be citizens, and to swear on the word of courtier-historians. Lorenzo was the second of the race who reached the pinnacle in virtue of the principle of heredity, not yet declared, but implicitly accepted. From the first day he followed the path that Cosimo and Piero had traced for him, and, thanks to them, his foot upon it was surer. His enemies' dagger only warned him to look more closely at his feet, and to avoid the stones of offence.

It is true these stones became rarer by the very failure of

the Pazzi, for nobody dared to fling others after their terrible expiation. More than ever did all peaceful folk, through fear of disorder and the unknown, rally round the young lord, so miraculously protected by Heaven. From without alone could danger come. It was no small thing, in the ardour of rage, to have killed two priests, hanged an archbishop, and imprisoned a cardinal, the Pope's nephew, without the slightest proof of his complicity in the conspiracy. At first, his imprisonment, which could not last long, left Sixtus IV. indifferent enough. To the Florentines he wrote letters of condolence, and he assured the Cardinal of Mantua, his legate at Bologna, that he did not reproach the Bolognese with having sent aid to Florence, since Florence had not committed any offence against ecclesiastical dignity.¹ But the disappointed instigator of the great plot was too near him not to help to change his mind.

Count Girolamo Riario neglected nothing to shuffle the cards and to disturb his uncle and the Sacred College. Well informed as to the acts and words of his Florentine enemies, he reported, underlined and distorted everything. In despite the Pope, who persisted in distinguishing between Lorenzo and his fellow-citizens, he extended from the one to the others the responsibility of his real or imaginary grievances, and in Rome he headed a demonstration against the ambassador of the Republic, the esteemed and learned Donato Acciajuoli.² Followed by armed men, he carried off from his house this inviolable person, paying no heed to his energetic protestations, and conducted him between a guard of pikes to the pontifical palace.

¹ "Cum nihil adhuc Florentini in ecclesiasticum dignitatem moliti essent. . . . Nos quoque casum ipsum primum indoluimus, et commiserationis nostræ testimonium per literas nostras ad Florentinos dedimus." This letter is found in the commission MS. of the Pope to the Cardinal of Bologna. Gino Capponi, who possessed it in his library, reports (p. 123 n. 2) the above passages, and he adds that no Florentine historian mentions it any more than the other.

² Michele Bruto says of Donato, "Vir nobilitate et probitate vitæ pariter domi forisque habitus clarus" (L. vii. in *Burm.*, vol. viii. part i. p. 166).

They wanted to have him under their control, and not to bring him to the Pope, but they could not refuse him the satisfaction he insistently claimed. Before Sixtus IV., whose anger was now alight, to everybody's surprise, he fell upon humility. So far from maintaining the rights of the Florentines, insulted in the person of their young chief, he protested that he had nothing to do with the events, that he knew nothing about them, and that he disapproved of everything. This dashed the arms from the Pope's hands, even had the ambassadors of Milan and Venice not already relieved him of them, by their assertion that they would regard as a personal insult all injury done their colleague. Sixtus IV. ordered that Donato be escorted to his house. If he had had the feeling of outraged dignity, of violated inviolability, surely Donato would have profited by his recovered liberty to shake the dust of Rome from his feet and return to Florence. Instead, he meanly stayed in Rome, degraded and powerless. His despatches recommended the instant freedom of the young Cardinal, who, he swore by all his gods, had been imprisoned solely to save him from the fury of the people. Had not the magnificent lords promised to give him up as soon as he should be claimed? Now, it was impossible to ignore that the Bishop of Perugia, sent to Florence with that purpose, had claimed him.¹

But little fear so precious a hostage would thus be given up. Many Florentine merchants were in Rome, threatened in their persons and in their goods. They had secretly received orders to place their merchandise in safety and to evacuate the Eternal City, and had not kept the secret. In turn, fearing to lose hostages that guaranteed the protection of his subjects' money in Florentine banks, Sixtus IV. had all the issues from Rome guarded, and flung into the Castle of Sant' Angelo all those suspected of a desire to depart. At the end

¹ *Vespasiano, Vita di D. Acciajuoli, c. 16, Spicil. Rom., i. 451; G. Capponi, ii. 121, 122.*

of four hours they were released, under promise of not going away.¹ The Cardinal of Ostia, informing his friend Lorenzo of these facts, added in his missive, that five members of the Sacred Collège had been named to take proceedings "against Florence"—and not Lorenzo solely, as the Pope wanted to pretend later—if the Cardinal of San Giorgio was not released at once.² Yield, he urged, or else the resolutions of the five cardinals, ratified by the Sacred College, will be very grave, seeing that nothing can overcome the Sacred College.³ On her side, Venice gave the same counsel. She suggested the excuse, already offered by the Florentines, that Raffaello Sansoni had only been imprisoned in his own safety, and she added that, since the danger had ceased, this explanation would be rendered valueless if there was any longer delay about the release.⁴

The Cardinal of Ostia's letter was dated May 24. On June 1, Sixtus IV. fulminated a sentence of excommunication against Lorenzo, the Signory, the Eight, and all the accomplices in their detestable work. He enumerated all his grievances, new and ancient, imaginary and real: the help given to Niccolò Vitelli in the war of Città di Castello; the favour accorded Carlo Fortebracci in his attempt against Perugia and his expedition upon Siennese territory; the asylum offered for a while to Deifobo of the Anguillara, a fugitive from Rome. Lorenzo and the Eight were accused of wishing, "with the fury of mad dogs," to kill and destroy a vast number of citizens that the chief of the Medici might be strengthened in his vengeance; of having introduced him for this purpose, against the general

¹ The Cardinal of Ostia's letter, charged with restoring the Florentine merchants to freedom, to Lorenzo de' Medicis, Rome, May 24, 1478, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 116.

² "La santità di N. S. ha deliberato procedere per via di rasone contro quella vostra Excelsa Comunità, se non si rende liberamente el R^{mo} Mgr. le Card. di S. Giorgio" (*ibid.*, p. 116).

³ "Purchè sapete che il sacro collegio non more mai" (Letter of the Card. of Ostia, *ibid.*, p. 116). A part of the text of this letter may be found in Capponi, ii. 123.

⁴ In Romanin, vol. iv. p. 389, may be seen the text of this letter from Venice, dated May 22. G. Capponi quotes a passage, p. 123, n. 1.

will, into the *balie*,¹ whence arose so many public and private discords; of having refused for three long years to allow the Archbishop of Pisa to take possession of his diocese; of having ignominiously hanged this prelate from a window, and afterwards flung his corpse upon the ground; of having killed other ecclesiastics;² of having insulted and imprisoned a cardinal of the Holy Church, proof "of a devouring thirst of injustice and cruelty against the clergy and the Church, which these rash men wish to rob." As an aggravating circumstance, these evil deeds were perpetrated on a Sunday! The brief took care not to mention that the murder of the Medici had been committed on the same Sunday upon sacred ground; that the priests were mixed up in it, and that it is not customary to put off to the morrow the suppression of those who want to kill you to-day.

Thus Lorenzo was declared *iniquitatis filius et perditionis alumnus*,³ and condemned with those whom the Pope branded with him as "infamous, abominable, worthless, they, their sons and descendants, unfit for ecclesiastical honours, for civil offices, to inherit, to appear in court, or to be heard therein as witnesses." Every man was forbidden to hold business relations or conversation with them; their goods should be escheated, their houses destroyed and left for ever in ruins, to preserve for posterity the remembrance of their wickedness and its punishment. If within a month the town of Florence had not given them up to the ecclesiastical tribunals, she would be laid under severe interdict, as well as the dioceses of Fiesole and Pistoia.⁴

¹ "Ægre hoc ferentibus civibus" (Excommunication of June 1, text in *Ann. Eccl.*, 1478, § 5-10, vol. xxix. p. 582-585. The words quoted are on p. 584).

² Doubtless the two murderers of Giuliano.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 582.

⁴ The analysis of the text in the *Ann. Eccl.* can be seen in Cipolla (p. 586), Sismondi (vii. 117), and Capponi (ii. 124), who gives more details. Ammirato (xxiv. 120) piously passes over in silence this monstrous brief, and only speaks of the Pope's anger. Capponi, to exculpate him as much as possible, says (p. 125) that Gir. Riario dictated, and that Sixtus merely added his signature. As if any one could decline the responsibility of signing an act so grave and so aggravated by its very terms!

This display of bad faith, this cynical and furious language, benefited Lorenzo rather than injured him, as it showed the father of the faithful on the side of the assassins at a time when he had not any acknowledged right to interfere in the domestic affairs of neighbouring powers. But politics did not lose their rights in Florence. Five days later, June 5, the Republic began to yield, not without saving appearances. Cardinal Sansoni was conducted from the Medici palace, where he had been detained, to the convent of the Servi, which he was permitted to leave on the 12th June. He did not wait to be told to go a second time. On Florentine ground his feet trod burning coals, and next day he was in Sienna, on his way to Rome, still white and trembling.¹ When he arrived there, Florence had another enemy.

But it looked as if she intended to brave them all, for on June 13, as soon almost as the Cardinal had turned on his heel, the Ten of War were appointed, amongst whom were Tommaso Soderini and Lorenzo himself.² This was, however, little else but the satisfaction of pride and bravado. The election was no longer, as of old, a declaration of immediate war. For that matter, nobody was ready. The people were distracted from more serious matters by a singular plague that swept over Italy from Venice to Florence, and even beyond. A cloud of locusts fell upon the country, especially in Mantua and Brescia. Thousands of hands were employed to kill these destructive insects, but none to bury them. Their decomposition in the open air resulted in a dreadful pest, which carried off in a month more than 2000 soldiers and several

¹ *Codex LXVII. Abbatie Florentinae*, quoted by Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 115. Cf. Alleghetti, *Diarii Sanesi*, R.I.S., xxiii. 784. We find in the *Atti della Sinodo Fiorentina* (Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 158) a letter of Cardinal Sansoni to the Pope, dated June 10, and in consequence from the convent of the Servi. He praises greatly Lorenzo's behaviour to him, and expresses regret that his prayers to the Pope should not have tempered his anger. If this letter be not a forgery, which is not known, it is explained by the fact that Sansoni was not yet free. The lifted paw of the Florentine lion might yet fall upon him.

² Ammirato, xxiv. 120.

of the principal officers of the Republic. Venice was deserted, the councils could not assemble; and even supposing Rome were still spared, Sixtus IV. would not have been in a hurry to send his troops into the midst of infection.¹

For the moment, then, war upon paper replaced war upon the field. The Florentine Chancellery replied to the Pope upon the question of excommunication, and spread afar its complaints; but Bartolommeo Scala needed so much time to furbish and revise his ample and elegant Latin periods, that they were not ready until August 11.² Lorenzo took counsel with theologians even out of Florence.³ Their advice being that the Pontifical thunderbolt had no value, the order was given to the three dioceses under interdict to ring the bells, say mass, and administer the sacraments as usual. The consultation of these persons learned in canon law was drawn up in the form of a reply to the Pope, dated from Santa Reparata,⁴ July 23, in very lively terms, and sent to the Emperor, to the kings of France, Spain, and Hungary, and to all the Christian princes. It claimed support against such violence, and reparation of a scandal that was a general offence. Truly a sword thrust in water, and such it was felt to be.

At the same time, the Signory wrote an apologetic letter to the Pope, in which it feigned to take literally his assertion

¹ *Diario Parmense*, xxii. 280; Ammirato, xxiv. 125; Sismondi, vii. 135.

² The reply was published for the first time by Adimari at the end of Politien's *Conspiracy of the Pazzi*, ed. of Naples, pp. 171-176. The principal part is Montesecco's confession, which was a revelation of the incontestable reality and gravity of the conspiracy. It is the *Excusatio Florentinorum* published by Fabroni, *Doc.*, pp. 167-181. See Cipolla, p. 587, and Capponi, ii. 125.

³ Whether these theologians met in a synod is a controvertible question. Reumont and Cipolla believe so; Fabroni does not. Roscoe and his Italian translators are of his opinion; Capponi doubts. Lami declares that a proof MS. of the counter-excommunication was seen, and that many MSS. less "orridi" have been lost (*Lezioni di Antichità Toscana*, vol. i., pref., p. 135, Flor., 1766). Ammirato names the theologians consulted (xxiv. 123).

⁴ This consultation is found, under the title *Atti della Sinodo Fiorentina*, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, pp. 136-166, and in Roscoe, *Append. No. 27*, vol. iii. p. 167 *seq.* According to Fabroni, the writer was Gentile Becchi, Bishop of Arezzo; according to Reumont (i. 441), Rinaldo Orsini, Archbishop of Florence, one an old preceptor of Lorenzo, and the other one of his wife Clarissa's relations.

that he solely demanded Lorenzo's expulsion.¹ Such indeed was the argument and attitude of Sixtus, who wished to pose as a liberator. In writing to Federico of Urbino, July 25, that "God had taken from the Florentines both intelligence and feeling to punish them for their sins,"² his anger was only directed towards his nephew's gaoler.³ They were simple minds who accepted the Pope's words as gospel: he confessed afterwards that to free Florence he was pursuing the followers of Lorenzo as well as Lorenzo himself.⁴ But in reality he was led by many diverse influences. Jacopo Ammanati, Cardinal of Pavia, counselled him to gain time,⁵ and many of the members of the Sacred College exhorted him to conciliation, while the King of Naples cried out for vengeance against the Florentine who had joined a league against him;⁶ and at the Pontifical court Girolamo Riario and Raffaello Sansoni led the chorus for war.

In thus pretending to separate Lorenzo from Florence, what could be Sixtus' gain? Doubtless he hoped that, by wearying Florence with war and interdict, he would achieve the expulsion of "the tyrant." This was a policy; but it should have been logically carried out, and the Florentines should not have

¹ "Ejicere nos e civitate vis Laurentium de Medicis . . . et quod tyrannus noster sit et publico christianæ religionis bono adversetur." See the text in Galli, *De rebus genuens.*, R.I.S., xxiii. 293-295. There is no date.

² Text in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 130.

³ "Non agimus quicquam contra alios nisi contra illum ingratum, excommunicatum et hæreticum filium iniquitati Laurentium de Medicis" (*Ibid.*, p. 130).

⁴ "Di comune consenso fu deliberato di prender l'armi contro Lorenzo et suoi seguaci come contra petram scandali et perturbatore della pace et quiete d'Italia per metter la città di Firenze in libertà" (February 1480. The Pope's instructions to Antonio Crivelli, sent to the King of Naples. Text in Capponi, *Append.* No. 5, vol. ii. p. 584, from a MS. in his library. These instructions contain a sort of *résumé* of the past).

⁵ July 16, Jac. Ammanati wrote in this sense to the Pope, urging him to promise to pardon the Florentines if they repented, to defer receiving the French ambassadors while the plague lasted, which prevented the cardinals from meeting (Card. Papiens, Ep. 693, analysed by Sismondi, vii. 119-121, mentioned by Capponi, ii. 131).

⁶ "Instando (il Re) per l'espulsione di Lorenzo . . . etiam che vi fossero molti cardinali che ci dissuadessero detta esclusione" (Instruct. to Ant. Crivelli, *ibid.*, p. 529).

been irritated by the pillage of their banks and shops in Rome and in Naples, which thus provoked the public opinion of both cities in their favour.¹ If the popes were infallible at all, it certainly was not in the part of temporal princes.

Lorenzo, on his side, feeling the celestial storm gathered over his head, addressed himself to all the saints to ward it off. Bartolommeo Scala's reply, which at last was ready, made the round of the courts as the consultation of the Florentine clergy. Drawn up in the name of a town once so Guelph, it appealed formally to the Emperor.² Lorenzo, establishing more intimate relations with Louis XI.,³ was not long kept in suspense. Replying, May 27, to the letters of condolence upon the murder of his brother, brought him by Philippe de Comines,⁴ he humbly pleaded "not guilty." He declared that his only crime had been to resist being killed. He promised the king the friendship of the three allied States, Florence, Milan, and Venice, and begged his resolute support against the Pope, and proposed a council.⁵ He pretended that his affairs were much improved by the coming of the "very illustrious Lord of Argentan," who, after a year's sojourn, acknowledged his powerlessness.⁶ But Lorenzo was too far-seeing not to recognise that he had little to hope from Louis XI. This practical monarch only believed in fighting by despatches and embassies.⁷ He gave vent to his discontent; he

¹ *Diar. Parm.*, xxii. 279; Giovanni di Juzzo in the *Cronache di Viterbo*, published by Ignazio Ciampi, Flor., 1872, p. 419, and quoted by Cipolla, p. 587.

² See Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 181.

³ Desjardins (vol. i. *passim*) shows that the despatches were not purely diplomatic. Dogs, magic rings, and the way to wear them were demanded, &c., details proclaiming very close intimacy.

⁴ These letters are of May 12. See Desjardins, i. 171.

⁵ Letters of May 27 and June 19. See Buser, p. 194; Cipolla, p. 589; Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 131. Capponi (p. 126) judged the letter of June 19 "fiere e dignitose." I cannot accept this judgment.

⁶ "Que res rebus nostris multum attulit favoris et dignitatem multum ornavit . . . insurgunt in nos isti crudelissimi hostes et multa succedunt, quia sunt adorti improvisos . . ." (Text in Desjardins, i. 172-173). "La faveur du roy fit quelque chose, mais non pas tant que j'eusse voulu, car je n'avois armée pour les ayder" (Comines, i. vi. chap. iv. vol. ii. p. 204).

⁷ This is seen in the despatches published by Desjardins, i. 173-186.

called Count Girolamo "homme naguères comme incongneu, de basse et petite condition;" he complained of "la grant voidange d'argent qui se tire de nostre royaume."¹ In a very lively letter to the Pope he quoted Scripture and the Apocalypse concerning those who, having caused scandal, atrociously persisted therein; he expressed unreverential regret that his Holiness did not know what he was about, and was not immaculate amid so much crime.² Not having been listened to when he demanded the meeting of a council to unite the Christians against the Turks, he called one himself at Orleans in the month of September, solely composed of French prelates, who owed him obedience and submission.

Even on this, his own ground, the Pontifical ambassador³ played a trick on him, in spite of the Florentine ambassador.⁴ Impeded by the Nuncio's fine promises,⁵ this National Council, presided over by Pierre de Bourbon, composed of three hundred clergy and a great number of lords, only resulted in the following declaration, in which the interests of France seem better protected than those of Italy: "Le royaume italique et les autres puissances confédérées avec le roy très chrestien, ayant interest à ce qu'un concile général soit tenu tous les dix ans, le pape sera requis d'en convoquer un le plus tost possible, et jusqu'à ce que ledict seigneur pape ait déposé les armes prises par luy contre les chrestiens, aucun argent ne sera

¹ Ord. of Selommès, August 16, 1478. *Ordonnances des Rois de France*, vol. xviii. pp. 425-427.

² "Utinam Sanctitas Vestra dignaretur considerare quod egit. . . . Utinam a tam nefandis rebus Sanctitas Vestra immaculata foret" (Letter of August 18, 1478, in Malipieri, *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., vol. vii. p. 247).

³ Gian Andrea des Grimaldi, Bishop of Fréjus, ambassador of the Holy See at the court of France. "Il n'est venu fors pour dissimuler et nous cuider abuser" (Louis XI.'s letter to the Cardinals, October 17, 1478, in Buser, *Append.*, p. 483. Cf. p. 197 of the same).

⁴ Baccio Ugolini, sent by Lorenzo to the Emperor and the King of France, August 14, 1478, Buser, p. 196-197.

⁵ L'assemblée à Orléans de' prelati di Francia si tiene et è vi gran giente, ma non credo vi si conchiuga nulla per la speranza che questo vescovo a dato al Re che Papa farà" (Leonardo des Rossi's letter to Lorenzo, Lyons, September 26, in Buser, *Append.*, p. 478).

envoyé à la chambre apostolique, dans la crainte qu'il ne serve à la continuation de la guerre."¹ Such was the last word of French policy, a pretext for not sending any more money. Lorenzo cannot have been deceived by it.

Might greater reliance be placed on Venice? She was bound to Florence by the league, and the Pope expected she would turn against him.² She had warned him of her intent (July 7), while an embassy was sent to assure Lorenzo that negotiations were on foot with Ferrara and Milan to furnish him with help. The Venetian ambassador at the court of Rome was to reply, in case the Pope referred him to Count Girolamo, that the Most Serene Republic had accredited him only to his Holiness.³ Two months later, the Council of Ten represented to Sixtus IV., as Louis XI. had done, that it was urgent to bring this war to an end in order to turn upon the Turk (September 18), and on December 7th it wrote to the Emperor and the King of France to strengthen their intention of calling a general council.⁴ All these superficial steps meant nothing in a century when even signed treaties carried

¹ *Bibl. Nat. Fonds Français*, MS. 3880: *Relation exacte de la négociation faite par les ambassadeurs de Louis XI. pour traiter de la paix entre le Pape Sixte IV. et le Roy de Naples d'une part, et la Rép. de Venise, les Ducs de Milan et de Ferrare et la Rép. de Florence d'autre part es années 1478 et 1479.* This MS. is only a copy, but it is too full of faults to be a forgery. Besides, it was amongst those given to the Library by Antoine Lancelot, named inspector of the Royal College in 1732. Montfaucon indicates it (*Bibliotheca Bibliothecarum Manuscriptorum*, vol. ii. pp. 1667-1669); and M. Dantier gives an interesting analysis of it (*L'Italie, Etude Historiques*, ii. 172 sq.). Cf. Gilles André de la Roque, *Hist. de la Maison d'Harcourt*, vol. i. p. 445, Paris, 1662, in 4to. This writer only sees the agitated affair of Orleans from the French point of view. Labbe only writes a word upon the meeting, and the historians do not even speak of it.

² "Ad Venetos habbiamo justificatamente riposto se faranno cose injuste, Deus est desuper, qui retribuit unicuique juxta opera sua" (the Pope's letter to Ferd. of Urbino, July 25, 1478, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 131).

³ "Si Beatitudo ipsa vos, ut solet, remitteret ad comitem Hieronymum, dicite esse oratorem nostrum ad sanctam sedem apostolicam et ad illius Beatitudinem, si Summus Pontifex esse voluerit memor debiti et officii sui, non ad comitem Hieronymum" (Arch. Venice. Sen. Secr. xxviii. f. 103, July 7, 1478, in Brosch, *Papst Julius II. und de Gründung der Kirchenstaates*, notes, p. 304, n. 3, Gotha, 1878).

⁴ Doc. of the *Secreta*, indicated by Romanin, ix. 389-392.

no weight. Lorenzo was well aware that Venice accused him of having embarked upon this accursed Italian war.¹

Thus he was quite alone, or nearly so. On the other hand, the Pope could count on the King of Naples and on Federico of Urbino, a petty prince, but “grant et saige homme et bon capitaine,”² whom he placed at the head of his army. He remembered the saying of one of his predecessors, Pius II., that this man, blind of an eye, saw more with one eye than others with two.³ He respected in him the adventurous soldier who had learnt caution and punctuality in Piccinino’s school, and execution and rapidity of thought in Sforza’s. He knew him to be disposed to form a company and accept a *condotta* to cut out for himself a principality, since that of his father, Guidantonio of Montefeltro, was the inheritance of the legitimate son, not of the bastard.⁴

This brilliant condottiere, with Alphonsus of Calabria, Fer-rante’s son, was upon the Florentine frontier by July 3. On the 11th, they encamped near Montepulciano, communicated with Sienna, and sent their contemptuous declaration of war to Florence by a simple trumpeter. The trumpeter carried a Pontifical missive, dated the 7th, signifying to the Florentines that Lorenzo’s ill-doing rendered war inevitable, but that arms would be laid down if he were expelled, as nothing then would prevent the Republic from joining the other States in the enterprise against the Turk.⁵

¹ “Resto avisato che del fatto de’ denari non mi bisogna stare a speranza, che Dio sa quanto sono suto contento, maxime intendendo le cagioni, e che costi reputano che io li habbi messi in guerra . . . Vorrei piutosto haverci perduto 10 m. ducati non che accatitili con tanto stento e vituperio che havere letto simili parole” (Lorenzo to Girolamo Morelli, November 13, 1478, in Buser, *Append.*, p. 485).

² Comines, l. iv. ch. iv. vol. ii. p. 203.

³ Ricotti, iii. 228. Federico, born in 1422, was still in his prime.

⁴ *Cron. d’Agobbio*, xxi. 996; Sacchetti, *Novelle*, nov. 119, vol. ii. p. 174; Ricotti, iii. 223-225. Cf. Ugolini, *Storia dei Conti e Duchi d’Urbino*, Flor., 1859; James Dennistoun, *Memoirs of the Dukes of Urbino*, London, 1851.

⁵ Luca Landucci, *Diario fior.*, p. 23. This curious chronicle, published in 1883, was known in MS. to Adimari, editor of Politien’s *Pazzi’s Conspiracy*: he quotes it in the *Append.*, p. 49, n. 113. Cf. Ammirato, xxiv. 222.

Even this defiance was slow to rouse Florence. Lorenzo harangued her with his well-oiled tongue.¹ "They threaten us with schism and disobedience," wrote the Pope.² Pliant to the spur, the Ten of War collected men and money everywhere; but money came in more readily than men. Venice only sent a few soldiers, not holding herself bound to furnish troops against a private individual like Count Girolamo.³ A few spare squadrons came from Milan, commanded by Alberto Visconti and Gian Jacopo Trivulzio, a noble captain, who had already served Louis XI. in opposing the League of Public Welfare,⁴ and who later on was Marshal of France in the Italian wars. What could he or Alberto Visconti do with a hundred armed men?⁵ What confidence could they hope to inspire when the year before an illegitimate daughter of Galeaz Maria, sister of the young Duke Gian Galeaz, had married this same Count Girolamo?⁶ There were almost as many captains as soldiers, and the best were already in the Pope's pay?⁷ The civil commissary of the army, Jacopo Guicciardini, lacked authority, and a captain-general could not be found. When Ercole of Este, Duke of Ferrara, was selected for this post, Venice raised objections against a prince who was too much of a neighbour to be a friend, who, as the King of Naples' son-in-law, would be a half-hearted leader against his brother-in-law, the Duke of Calabria;⁸ and Louis XI. was of this opinion too.⁹

¹ Ammirato (xxiv. 122) and Machiavelli (viii. 121 B) report his great speech, which Capponi quotes from Ammirato (ii. 127).

² Letter of Sixtus IV. to Ferd. of Urbino, July 25, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 131.

³ Malipieri, in *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., vii. 247; Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir.*, c. 5, *Op. ined.*, iii. 48; Machiavelli, viii. 122 B.

⁴ See Rosmini, *Vita di G. J. Trivulzio*, p. 11, Milan, 1815. Cf. Ricotti, iii. 216, on his exploits.

⁵ Rosmini, *ibid.*, p. 53.

⁶ In 1477. Giov. di Juzzo, *loc. cit.*, p. 414; Cipolla, p. 589; Litta, *Famiglia Sforza*, tav. 5.

⁷ See some names in Capponi, ii. 128.

⁸ Marin Sanuto, xxii. 1209; Malipieri, *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., vii. 246.

⁹ "Egli (Louis XI.) è molto grandemente maravigliato che voi abbiate fatto lo ducha di Ferrara chapitano gienerale, et dicie che se non vi viene più di male di questo che del parentado che è suto fatto, che non ve ne verrà mai punto" (Comines to Lorenzo, Turin, September 23, in Buser, *Append.*, p. 481).

None the less Ercole came to the camp before Poggio Imperiale. He came on September 13, and only received his baton of commander on the 27th, at half-past ten o'clock, or sixteen by Italian reckoning; thus the astrologers wished it. He was to be paid 60,000 florins in war, and 40,000 in peace. All his expenses and his followers were to be paid as long as he was upon the territory,¹ which meant that he was to go beyond it, and that beyond it they would live by war. But it was not probable that they could act upon the offensive. Trivulzio, in his letters, shows the Florentine army without provisions, without *guastatori* or order, the men scattered, the regiments mixed, or separated one from the other by a half mile; hardly a hundred and fifty infantry properly armed. To their own soldiers the Florentines shamelessly sold provisions at the highest possible rate, and victuals from outside were subjected to taxes so heavy as to be almost prohibitive.² The discipline and perfection of the Lombard army, so much admired by the civil commissary,³ were nevertheless lost upon this nation of merchants. "This was how our soldiers of Italy fought," writes a discouraged contemporary, Luca Landucci: "thou wilt rob down there, and I here. There is no need to approach one the other. A castle is bombarded for several days, and nobody thinks of relieving it. One of these days we shall have to have the Ultramontanes to teach us war."⁴ This chronicler and patriotic grocer was an unconscious prophet.

¹ Al Rinuccini, p. 129.

² "Vidi questa gente de' signori fior. cum uno tristissimo ordine per modo ch'io ne ebbi disgusto, senza ordine alcuno, l'uno homo d'arme lontano dall'altro . . . spesso una squadra meschiata coll'altra, per modo ch'io non li comprendeva regola . . . una squadra era lontana dall'altra mezzo miglio. . . . Fano vendere le victualie più caro sii possibile senza limitatione di pretii ad le robe. . . . Sel vene robe in campo nè della Lombardia nè d'altro, li fano pagare tanti dazi chel è una meraviglia et che è pezo le reteneno nè le lassano passare Fiorenzia" (Trivulzio to the Duke of Milan, in Rosmini, *Vita di Trivulzio*, vol. ii., Doc. 2 and 4, p. 31, 32; cf. p. 36, and in Ricotti, iii. 218, n. 1).

³ "Il commissario fior. che accompagnava l'esercito rimase molto maravigliato e contento della disciplina ed eleganza della soldatesca lombarda" (Rosmini, vol. i. p. 53).

⁴ Luca Landucci, *Diario*, p. 24, 25.

Less far-seeing, Lorenzo had never occupied himself with the study of war. He was full of confidence, and did not believe it possible that the enemy would attack him;¹ he only saw their weak, and not their strong side. Comines, who was there, saw both. He saw the Pontifical and Neapolitan troops scattered over Chianti, covering the Val d'Elsa and the heights that dominate the Val d'Arno, destroying the country by fire and pillage, besieging the castles of the energetic Ricasoli.² "Ils prenoient," he wrote, "toutes les places qu'ils assiégeoient, mais non pas si promptement comme on feroit ici, car ils ne sçavoient point si bien la manière de prendre places, ne de les deffendre, mais de tenir un champ et de y donner bon ordre, tant aux vivres que aultres choses qui sont nécessaires pour tenir les champs, ils le sçavoient mieulx que nous."³

At last the Florentine army was massed and ready for action. At the same time Urbino and Calabria evacuated Chianti, advanced towards the valley of Chiana, and laid siege to the important place of Monte San Savino, which upon the frontier commanded the entrance to the plains of Arezzo and Cortona, to the valleys of Ambra and of Arno. Contrary to Lorenzo's calculation, they assumed the offensive, and the Duke of Ferrara hurriedly leaving the Siennese territory, where he had taken a few small towns, was ordered with the entire army to rush to the imperilled spot without delay.⁴

The warfare, hitherto guerilla, was now concentrated, and the advantage was in favour of Florence's enemies. The incapable and irresolute Florentine captain lost precious time in discussions with his officers and the civil commissary. He never found

¹ "Le cose della guerra si stanno allo usato et pare che i nostri nemici habbino poca speranza d'offenderne, perchè tucti i buoni luoghi sono bene provisti. . . . Sono a campo a uno piccolo palazzo d'uno nostro cittadino dimorato già dieci giorni. Chredo lo haranno, che vi hanno piantato due grosse bombarde" (Lorenzo to Comines, September 24, in Buser, Append., p. 482).

² Ammirato, xxiv. 127. Having lost their castles after a vigorous defence, the Ricasoli were allowed privileges and declared fit for office. See Al. Rinuccini, p. 130.

³ Comines, l. vi. ch. iv. vol. ii. p. 203.

⁴ Ammirato, xxiv. 128; Sismondi, vii. 126.

the camp in order. He was full of excellent reasons for holding himself aloof,¹ and allowed the deserters to increase. He granted a truce of eight days to his adversaries without exacting an interruption in the work of the siege. It hardly needed so much to make him suspected of treason.² Still worse, his brother Alberto, sent by the King of Naples to rouse Ferrara against a prince declared fallen by the Pope, visited him in his camp,⁴ it was thought with the object of turning him from his engagements. The fall of Monte San Savino under his eyes (November 8) increased the distrust and anger, when the conqueror was seen quietly installed in his winter quarters upon the heights above Chiana, while Ercole and his humiliated troops were below between the Olmo and Puliciano.⁵

Sismondi wonders that Lorenzo did not appear in the army during this campaign, of which he was the cause.⁶ Certain it is that his military incapacity was not an excuse, since the civil commissaries were hardly more capable than he, and his presence would have inspired his party with courage. It is true he had reason not to go far from Florence, of which he was not over-sure, but Monte San Savino was only fifteen leagues distant. He could often have gone and returned easily enough. Apparently he regarded the hostilities as unimportant, and preferred the closer field of diplomacy, where he was past-master, at a time when such masters were not wanting.

¹ "E'l nostro campo non volle mai andare a trovare e nimici" (Luca Landucci, *Diario*, p. 28, 29. See on same page note upon the fruitless efforts of the Florentine government to obtain more serious measures).

² "Dissesi che'l nostro capitano non volle vincere e che non faceva el dovere, e non si diceva altro per popolo" (*Ibid.*, p. 32).

³ *Ann. Eccles.*, 1479, § 16, vol. xxix. p. 599.

⁴ *Diario Parm.*, xxii. 288.

⁵ The Olmo is in the valley of Chiana, on the road to Perugia. There are several Puliciano. The one in question is naturally the nearest to the Olmo. See Repetti, iii. 657, and iv. 683. On these facts Allegretti, xxiii. 784; Ammirato, xxiv. 129; Machiavelli, viii. 123 A; Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir.*, c. 5, *Op. ined.*, iii. 49; Luca Landucci, *Diario*, p. 28, who gives November 1 as the date of the taking of Montesansavino.

⁶ See Sismondi, vii. 127.

It would be tedious to enumerate all the ambassadors who in the affairs of Italy wore out their horses' hoofs upon the highways of Europe. To the potentates who looked upon Lorenzo as a brother and a cousin, the Pope appeared to go too far. While Lorenzo despatched by an orator to justify him at a Diet invoked in Germany by the Emperor Frederick III.,¹ he received an ambassador from Mathias Corvinus, King of Hungary (November 12), who came to offer this prince's mediation.² Venice, freed from the Turks,³ no longer alleged as an excuse for abstaining from the war its private character; she represented to the Pontifical ambassadors that the Pope "injured the Florentines spiritually and temporally, upon the request of others, and for the satisfaction of dishonest appetites."⁴ It was a lie, she said, to pretend that the much-calumniated Lorenzo alone was attacked. "It was the State itself and the form of government that he wished to reach."⁵

Louis XI. went still further than Venice. In December 1478 he sent eight ambassadors to Italy, two for each of the towns of Milan, Rome, Naples, and Florence.⁶ Their instructions included a renewed invitation to the Pope to call "un consille général en lieu décent et compétant là où nostre dict Saint Père, se son plaisir estoit, se pourroit trouver en personne, ou y commettre et deputer legat."⁷ They were to propose

¹ "Per giustificare le cose nostre e li incharichi che ne ha dati il papa iniustamente" (Lorenzo to Comines, October 24, 1478, in Buser, Append., p. 486).

² Lorenzo to Girolamo Morelli, November 13, 1478, in Buser, Append., p. 485.

³ Venice had concluded peace with the Turks, January 26, 1479. See Sismondi, vii. 149.

⁴ "A petitione d'altri e per satisfaire dishoneste voglie e appetiti di chi si sia" (Secreta, p. 91; Romanin, iv. 390. Text in Capponi, ii. 132, n. 2).

⁵ "Perchè ben intendemo tutti nui questa offesa no'esser fatta più alle particolarità de Lorenzo innocentissimo di tutte quelle calunnie si sono apposte, che al presente stato e forma de governo de la città di Fiorenza" (*Ibid.*).

⁶ *Diario Parm.*, xxii. 294. Malipieri (p. 247) errs when he states that these ambassadors reached Venice November 24, as their instructions were dated 20th (*Bibl. Nat. MS.*, 3880, f. 17), and in this MS. (f. 29 v°), in Buser (p. 203), we find that they entered Milan December 27.

⁷ See these instructions in the MS. of *Bibl. Nat.*, No. 3880. The quoted passage is in f. 17 r°.

Lyons,¹ and offer an apology for the Florentines, "qui se sont toujours montrés et exhibés bons et loyaux François," representing that the war made upon them by Riario was the sole cause that prevented them from seconding Venice in defence of the faith.² On the 15th January 1479, Louis XI.'s ambassadors at Florence stated in their official audience that the Pope "avoit fait sçavoir au roy . . . qu'il estoit content luy remettre la pacification de la dissention qui estoit entre nostre dict Saint Père et le roy Ferrand d'une part, icelle Seigneurie de Florence, le magnifique Laurens et la ditte illustrissime Ligue d'autre."³

The signors who gave them audience suspected that these fine speeches meant action. "Go forth, royal angels," they said, "under the protection of angels divine; go to those who have sent you, and restore to Italy the peace that is her due!"⁴ But Lorenzo saw more clearly into Louis's game,⁵ who, old and sickly, masked his approaching end from Europe by negotiations or menaces, though at heart he was little inclined for enterprises he had not the strength to carry out.⁶ He paid no heed to the promise of five hundred lancers, knowing they would not arrive, though he was much in need of them,⁷ as he

¹ *Bibl. Nat.* of Paris, MSS., No. 3880, f. 20 r^o.

² *Ibid.*, f. 21 r^o v^o.

³ *Ibid.*, f. 50 v^o.

⁴ "Agite igitur, angeli regii, divinis angelis comitantibus, vadite quo mittimini, et reddite Italiæ debitam pacem" (*Ibid.*, f. 55 r^o). We can see that the Florentine orator understood the double meaning of the word *angelus*, and that the pun was intentional.

⁵ "Noi abbiamo poca speranza di pace per questo mezzo di Francia, per molte ragioni che intendete meglio di me, et pero vorremmo che non ci nocessi quello che non speriamo ci possi molto giovare, et che questa giustificazione della speranza della pace non ci tirassi uno altro anno la guerra adosso et fussimo trovati sproveduti" (Lorenzo to Tommaso Soderini, orator in Venice, December 11, 1748, in Buser, *Append.*, p. 484).

⁶ "Il faisoit tant de semblables choses et telles qu'il estoit plus crainct de ses voisins et de ses subjectz qu'il n'avoit jamais esté: car aussi c'estoit sa fin, et le faisoit pour ceste cause" (Comines, l. vi. c. vii. vol. ii. p. 234).

⁷ "A me pare che questa deliberatione del Re del mandare nuova ambasciata in Italia, sia buona, se al medesimo tempo le gente d'arme ancora loro passassino et non si lasciassi indrieto la convocatione de' prelati ad Orlens" (Lorenzo to Comines, September 24, 1478, in Buser, *Append.*, p. 482).

had no desire for peace, which every one knew.¹ As soon as he learnt the conditions of the Holy See, he hastened to communicate them to Louis XI., first by his most trusty messenger, Donato Acciajuoli, who was so ill-treated in Rome, and after his death *en route* in Milan,² by Guidantonio Vespucci, a renowned lawyer.³ Sixtus IV. insisted that the negotiations should be intrusted to the kings of France and England, with a legate, the Emperor and his son, Maximilian, who was married to the heiress of Burgundy. Now, Louis XI. being upon unfriendly terms with these princes, the Florentines found themselves supported by a single ally, whose earnestness was far from reliable.⁴ If they wanted peace without waiting for arbitration, they should implore pardon and absolution, give alms, offer up masses, build an expiatory chapel in memory of the priests killed in the conspiracy, efface the infamous effigy of the Archbishop Salviati, promise not to attack the States of the Church, pay a pecuniary indemnity, or make restitution of Borgo San Sepolcro, and even Modigliana and Castrocaro, places acquired long before this war.

In communicating these exorbitant conditions to their allies,

¹ "El Re di Francia ha rivocati li amb. che mandava in Italia, et so che sarà tenuta mia opera, et che la prima cosa che dirà el Re di Francia alli amb. nostri sarà che Lor. de' Medici ha voluto che li rivochi," &c. (Lorenzo's letter, November 1748, in Buser, Append., p. 483). In December, concerning the new French embassy, Lorenzo wrote: "De leur venue il adviendra facilement que nos compagnons (de la Ligue) qui sont naturellement froids, le deviendront d'autant plus par l'espoir de la paix. A quoi il y a deux remèdes: l'un de pousser les préparatifs de la guerre; l'autre, qui les membres de la Ligue adjoignent chacun un orateur aux ambassadeurs français pour empêcher un trop long séjour à Rome, si les réponses du Pape étaient belliqueuses ou seulement dilatoires" (Lorenzo to Tomm. Soderini, December 11, 1478, in Buser, Append., p. 484).

² D. Acciajuoli, dead, was covered with honours, and his family with favours, to encourage the State servants. His two sons became wards of the Republic, and his two daughters were dowered. The entire family for fifteen years was exempted from all taxes. See the provision in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 191 (not dated). Cf. Vespasiano, *Vita di D. Acciaj.*, c. 20; *Spicil. Rom.*, i. 455; Rinuccini, p. 129; Machiavelli, viii. 123 B; Ammirato, xxiv. 126; M. Bruto, l. vii. in Burmann, vol. viii. part 1, p. 166.

³ Machiavelli, viii. 123 B; Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir.*, c. 5, vol. iii. p. 50.

⁴ See *Ann. Eccl.*, 1478, the protest of the ambassador, and the Pope's reply, §§ 19, 20, vol. xxix. p. 588.

the Signory entreated them to obtain more reasonable ones by means of a Council, but they felt so little hopeful of success that at the same time they begged Venice to yield them the condottiere Fortebracci.¹ There was a great need of serious help: those neighbours who were not declared enemies were hardly less hostile. Sienna was negotiating with Rome and Naples. At Lucca, young Pier Capponi, Neri's son, sent to hold the town, almost lost his life in a tumult provoked by Cola Montano, who pursued tyranny in Lorenzo's person as he had pursued it in Galeaz Maria's.² The friends, on the contrary, were inactive: Venice restrained Bentivoglio, the tyrant of Bologna, and Manfredi, the lord of Faenza, from attacking the principality of Imola, because it belonged to Count Girolamo, and because she would prevent war breaking out in Romagna.³ The Duke of Milan alone flung himself into the affair seriously, and the King of Naples prepared to strew his path with stumbling-blocks.

In such circumstances, was it credible that the French ambassadors would be listened to in Rome, where the final decision must be made? They were there by January 20, 1479. Having submitted their master's propositions to the Pope—the arbitration of the King, the pacification of Italy, and the General Council—they were struck by the passionate irritation which Sixtus IV. could not hide, and they declared that if any one hoped “oster au roy la seigneurie de Flor-

¹ Despatch to King of France, February 9, 1479, analysed in Desjardins, i. 184. Cf. Ammirato, xxiv. 136.

² Ammirato, xxiv. 130, 133; Machiavelli, viii. 123 B; M. Bruto, l. vii. in Burm., vol. viii. part 1, p. 167. In a letter of February 16, 1482, may be seen that Cola Montano, going by sea to Rome, was captured by the Florentines during a stop forced upon him by the weather, and that he had to continue his journey by land, after having offered those who detained him money, which they doubtless accepted (*Atti e memorie della deputazioni di storia patria delle provincie modenesi e parmensi*, vol. i. p. 259). Capponi (ii. 133) sees proof in this letter that Cola plotted against Lorenzo's life, but there is nothing more than we have stated. The same writer admits that the papers of his ancestor, Pier Capponi, contain nothing interesting upon his mission to Lucca.

³ See Sismondi, vii. 129.

ence, ses hommages et droits de Gennes et Savonne et autres seigneuries de ses parents, alliez et confédérez de l'illustrissime Ligue, il avoit délibéré, à l'aide de Dieu, de les sçavoir defendre et ayder comme feroit ou faire pourroit son propre royaume.”¹ The Pope having refused Louis's mediation, and the Imperial ambassador having added that his master would support the Holy See, and, like the other powers, that “il ne requéroit conseil,”² the French at once protested against this meddling of the Emperor, who was posing as an exclusive protector; but, making a step backward, they thought proper to say that they only demanded the Council in case his Holiness continued the war, by which means he was opening Italy to the Turk.³ To which Sixtus IV., angry with being pushed and pressed for a prompt decision, replied in visible ill-humour: “Aux condamnez à estre pendus en ce pays-ci, on leur donne quinze jours d'espace.”⁴ (In this country, those condemned to be hanged are allowed fifteen days' respite.)

He was only allowed eight. It was well known that at heart he was consumed by anxiety: he dreaded the rising of the Roman people and the nobles under the Church,⁵ which he was assured was pending; he dreaded the meeting of the General Council clamoured for by all the princes save the Emperor, where the irregularities of his life might be exposed, as well as the acts of simony by which his election was stained. For this reason he consented to an armistice, and suspended the sentence which Florence had not heeded (April 14). This half-success emboldened the ambassadors. They announced their intention to leave Rome in eight days if peace was not concluded before then⁶ (May 18).

But diplomatists do not necessarily depart because they have

¹ *Bibl. Nat.*, MS. 3880, f. 81 v°.

² *Ibid.*, f. 103 v°.

³ *Ibid.*, f. 103, r° 104 v°.

⁴ Audience of March 31. *Bibl. Nat.*, MSS., No. 3880, f. 134 r°.

⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 133 r°.

⁶ Despatch analysed in Desjardins, i. 185.

taken leave. A fresh audience was given on May 22, when the Venetian Badoer was bidden to speak. He maintained the previous propositions, declaring that "au cas que le Saint Père, dans huit jours, n'auroit accordé la paix, selon les offres des dicts Estats, les députez se départissent de Rome et s'en allassent devant leurs seigneurs, lesquels mettroient peine à se deffendre et de chasser les mauvaises herbes d'Italie,¹ ce dont ils avoient ordre, sous peine de perdre la tête."² Forced to a decision, Sixtus still found a means to equivocate. On May 31 he again called the ambassadors, and maliciously asked them if it really were to fight the Turk that they wanted peace just when Venice had concluded a truce with the Sultan of Constantinople. Badoer could not deny this recent scandalous treaty. "Venice," he said, "has fought the infidel for seventy years; abandoned and alone in front of him, she was forced to come to an arrangement, and she will hold to it without, on that account, ceasing to serve the interests of Christianity." The orators of Milan and Florence approved the reply, showing thereby that in all these negotiations the Turk was nothing else but what we vulgarly call "a Turk's head." But the Pope seized hold of the fact and its admission to refuse all pacific conclusion, and closed the sitting. Two days later, June 2, the ambassadors of the League took leave in full consistory and quitted Rome, inviting those of Louis XI. to do likewise, and ordering the prelates of their nations to depart instantly.³

After this fresh and vigorous flourish of the sword in water, the war continued, but under what conditions for Florence? She had only one real ally, Milan, and all her enemies' efforts were strained to embarrass the regent, Bonne of Savoy, the late Duke's widow, with accumulated difficulties. Since the preceding year, Sixtus IV. had been inducing the Swiss of the

¹ *Bibl. Nat.*, MS. 3880, f. 162 v^o.

² *Ibid.*, f. 178 r^o.

³ *Ibid.*, f. 178 v^o, 179 r^o. Despatch analysed in Desjardins, i. 185.

canton of Uri to attack the Milanese,¹ and lending underhand encouragement to the uncles of the young Gian Galeaz, whom she had been obliged to exile. One of the exiles, Lodovico, went to Lunigiana, where he engaged with King Ferrante and the Genoese exiles to provoke a rising in Genoa. After a series of incidents, Genoa had once more recovered her freedom (November 26, 1478).²

This was a serious complication for Lorenzo. Bonne of Savoy had ordered her captain Sforzino to assist the Florentines after having beaten the Genoese; but instead of beating them, he had himself been beaten. The Florentines paid dearly for their incapacity to make use of Leghorn and Pisa. In the power of their ally, Milan, Genoa was the great mart of their maritime traffic; free and protected by the Neapolitan fleet, she escaped them. Four galleys filled with merchandise, valuing more than 300,000 florins, were expected to reach that port; their seizure would entail a considerable loss and diminution of the resources of war, and would be a cause of commercial discouragement. Lorenzo was by this war compelled, instead of helping the regent to recover Genoa, to congratulate the new Doge, Battista de Campo Fregoso, and solicit his friendship; thus, in spite of excuses, wounding and alienating Milan.³

It was just at this time that Roberto de San Severino, a famous, but turbulent and factious captain, who had been banished from Milan, and expelled from Genoa, in agreement with the uncles and Sixtus and Ferrante,⁴ attacked Tuscany on the Pisan side with 4000 soldiers. Taken unawares, obliged to face this new enemy when behind them on the Siennese frontier were Urbino and Calabria, the Ten of War, hoping that in February the latter would not think it yet time to leave their winter quarters, faced the more urgent

¹ Sismondi, vii. 153; Zeller, p. 323.

² See Sismondi, vii. 129-134.

³ Galli, xxiii. 296-300; Sismondi, vii. 134.

⁴ *Diar. Parm.*, xxii. 295; Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir.*, c. v. vol. iii. p. 50; Machiavelli, viii. 123B; Rosmini, *Vita di Trivulzio*, ii. 34, 42, 49; Sismondi, vii. 131.

danger. Civil commissaries set out to support the first shock, to raise men, and to form a corps in the valley of Nievole, which should be on the look-out against a possible surprise of Lucca, while the Duke of Ferrara was recalled to command the army. But Ercole of Este, as slow and easy as uncertain, dreading an enemy inferior in numbers, was three entire weeks coming from Pisa to Sarzana, a distance of fifty miles. He left San Severino, who retreated before him, the advantage of two or three marches. He never caught a glimpse of him, and his soldiers had no chance of as much as a turn with their lances. The Ten bullied him enough, but he paid no heed to them; he even replied to "those merchants" that they knew nothing about it. He came back just as slowly toward his quarters on the Siennese frontier, where he found that Urbino and Calabria had made use of their time. Not daring to dismiss this incompetent captain, whose princely rank was a protection, no doubt, Lorenzo flanked him by well-known condottieri—Count Carlo of Montone, son of the celebrated Braccio, whom he obtained from the Venetians, Deifebo of the Anguillara, and a few great lords, Roberto Malatesta de Rimini, Costanza Sforza de Pesaro,¹ Antonello Manfredi de Forli, the three latter decoyed by enormous bribes from the Pope's service.² He counted chiefly upon Carlo de Montone; but this head of the *Bracceschi* had inherited a mortal hatred against the Malatesta and the *Sforzeschi*; while between their soldiers there was nothing but challenges and duels. Once even a general battle between them was imminent; to avoid it, Carlo was sent to Perugia, where he had adherents, and where he could divide the Papal forces. He died on June 17, and his rival, Malatesta, replaced him in this diversion.³ This latter,

¹ Alessandro Sforza's son, and nephew of the famous Francesco.

² *Diar. Parm.*, xxii. 303; Ammirato, xxiv. 133, 134, who says (p. 137) that he wrote this part of his history from the book of the Ten, in which there is a lacuna from June 21 to August 14, 1479; Machiavelli, viii. 123 B; M. Bruto, l. vii., in Burm., viii. part I, p. 167.

³ Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir.*, c. v. vol. iii. p. 50; Machiavelli, viii. 124 A; Ammirato, xxiv. 136; Reumont, i. 463.

victorious near Lake Trasimene, had drawn upon himself nearly all the hostile forces, thus relieving Ercole of all pretext for inaction; but after having seized a mere village upon the Siennese territory, Ercole fell into a strife with his personal rival, the Marquis of Mantua,¹ about some miserable booty, and Urbino profited by the occasion to separate the two bodies of the army by taking up a post upon the extremity of the valley of Chiana. Mantua and Ferrara, agreeing upon one single point, selected this moment to return to Reggio with the pretext of preventing the exiled Sforza from crossing the Apennines (August 10). By this stroke the Florentines found themselves without a leader, for Sigismondo of Este, left by his brother Ercole in his place, did not count.²

The war, as usual, was a pitiable spectacle. The Florentines were far from secure on Poggio Imperiale. They might have been the French. The enemy saw this, and rushed from Ponte to Chiusi (September 7). At the sight of the dust raised by this march, the Florentine army flew like a shot, abandoning munitions, chariots, and artillery. "It sufficed then," says Machiavelli, "for a horse to turn its head upon its tail to bring about a panic and the loss of an enterprise."³ Here stops the comparison with France, where at least they know how to defend themselves and die. The inhabitants of the valleys of Elsa and Pesa, seeing themselves no longer covered, took refuge in Florence with their goods. It was not until the return of the troops sent to Perugia that their cowardly comrades were inspired with some confidence, and together they finally fronted the Pontifical army upon the heights of San Casciano, eight miles from the capital. Neither Urbino nor Calabria, brave as little as they were clever, and advancing only as the enemy retreated, offered or accepted combat. They found it less perilous to disperse over the valleys, and more lucrative to ravage and pillage castles. The siege of the castle

¹ The Marquis of Mantua came in the pay of Milan.

² See Sismondi, vii. 158; Cipolla, p. 595.

³ Machiavelli, viii. 124 B.

of Colla detained them sixty days, although the garrison was so weak that women had to join the men upon the ramparts. This fine achievement having exhausted the assailing force, Calabria hastened to regain his winter quarters and accept the three months' truce that the Pope proposed.¹

Lorenzo must have joyfully welcomed this truce, as he no longer knew where to turn. He thought himself on the eve of losing the Milanese alliance, his anchor of safety. Bonne of Savoy, feeble and ill-counselled, closed upon by her brothers-in-law, was not able to prevent them from returning to Milan, whither the enemies of her old minister, Cecca Simoneta, summoned them. She even admitted them into the government as guardians of the young Duke. But soon she was forced to yield the place to the uncle, Lodovico—Lodovico il Moro, as he was called, who remained the master (September 8, 1439).²

This new lord, the wiliest of them all, did not reveal upon which side he would lean in the quarrel between Florence and the Holy See, but certain rumours gave Lorenzo to understand that he would end by pronouncing in favour of the Holy See.³ He believed it because he feared it. But could not a politician so far-seeing have seen that, Bonne put aside and Gian Galeaz fallen, Lodovico would renounce the Pope's alliance, which he only sought to checkmate these? Since Sforza's time the Florentine alliance was the interest as well as the tradition of the masters of Milan. But fear does not reason, or it reasons badly. Lorenzo's only hope was the House of Anjou, whose rights were doubtful, and whose intervention, for the moment, was hardly probable.⁴

¹ Allegretti, xxiii. 793-797; Machiavelli, viii. 124 B; Ammirato, xxiv. 138, 142; Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir.*, c. v. vol. iii. p. 54; M. Bruto, l. vii., in *Burm.*, vii. part 1, p. 170.

² Alb. de Ripalta, *Ann. Placent.*, xx. 959; Sismondi, vii. 159 sq.

³ Capponi, ii. 135.

⁴ The House of Anjou was then represented by René II., son of Ferry, Count of Vaudemont, and of Yolande, daughter of René I., who had brought to the House of Lorraine all her more or less doubtful rights. Her two brothers had died with-

At home the people murmured. Even the councils were accused, as is ever the case when a nation is vanquished. Lorenzo was reproached with everything—with sudden checks, errors committed, ruinous and useless expenses, unjust laws, dispersed troops, fortresses lost, the country devastated, trade compromised by the distrust of traders and the confiscations ordered by the Pope. A little more and they would have charged him with the plague of locusts. Must the entire town be lost for the sake of one man? A confidential friend had the courage to tell him that Florence was weary of war, and that she was no longer willing to endure interdict and excommunication in defence of the Medici.¹

What should he do? In his perplexity Lorenzo thought of the old motto, "Divide and rule." But in which of his two enemies should he seek a friend? The Pope was irreconcilable. The rebukes of Christendom angered him without enlightening him. On the contrary, the King of Naples made war politically, without any personal resentment. Undisputed master of the south of the peninsula, powerful in the north by the freedom of the Genoese and the domination of Il Moro in Milan, he might well regard himself on the eve of being recognised sovereign by Sienna, whose territory was occupied by his son. Why should he fear Lorenzo or wish for his expulsion, seeing him inferior in arms and badgered by an opposition increased by failures?²

In this judicious view of his position, on the 24th of November 1479, Lorenzo charged Filippo Strozzi, a merchant grown rich during his exile in Naples, to say to King Ferrante that he placed himself unconditionally in his Majesty's hands if he would establish peace and restore to Florence the cities

out heirs. Old René, who had only consented to her marriage to recover his own liberty, had disinherited her in favour of Charles, Count of Maine, his younger son, July 22, 1474. Charles died in 1481, bequeathing all his rights to Louis XI., whence those of Charles VIII. See Sismondi, vii. 163.

¹ Jacopo Nardi, l. i. vol. i. p. 25; Ammirato, xxiv. 142.

² See Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir.*, c. vi. vol. iii. p. 56.

she had lost.¹ He had to communicate this step to the Duke of Calabria, since he took it at the very time this heartless and choleric prince had consented to the truce.² Matters thus promised well, but, in order to hasten the conclusion, and believing only in himself, he resolved to start for Naples.

The court historians admire the boldness of this resolution. Lorenzo, they said, might leave behind him revolt, and in a like venture Piccinino had found his death.³ They did not understand that their idol had sufficiently degraded the Florentines to have nothing more to fear from them. They did not reflect on the lame comparison with Piccinino, nor remember that the suppressed condottiere left nobody behind to avenge him, while Florence might very well avenge the death of the master she cursed in life, or at least make the continuance of his policy a question of honour.

There was nothing further from recklessness, — nothing more calculated for effect than this voyage. King Ferrante had been consulted about it, and sent two galleys to Leghorn to receive the illustrious traveller. Upon the point of departure, the latter announced the fact to both captains of the hostile army, and by letter expressed a hope that he should, upon his return, find everything in order as when he left (December 6).⁴ On

¹ “A dire alla Maestà del Re che totalmente gli si rimetteva nelle braccia, e che in quello modo che S. M. lo volesse, o grandò o basso, dentro o fuori, era contento di modo che S. M. rendesse pacie alla ciptà e le terre tolte” (Filippo Strozzi’s account of the Pazzi conspiracy in Capponi, ii. 523, Append. 4).

² Ammirato, xxiv. 142. The Duke of Calabria “è di cattiva natura e collera, oltre che sia di natura che come ha fatto il fatto suo, non conosce più nè amico nè benevolo” (Aldovrandino Guidoni to Ercole of Este, October 1, 1486, *Atti e memorie*, &c., i. 287).

³ Piccinino was killed on Neapolitan ground, June 24, 1465. See chiefly Cristof. da Soldo, *Ist. Bresc.*, xxi. 903. Ricotti (iii. 195) and Sismondi (vi. 439) point out other sources.

⁴ “Mi parto per essere a Pisa e dipoi a Livorno, secondo l’ordine dato par trasferirmi a piei della Maestà del Re. Qui lascio le cose bene in ordine et in modo che ho speranza di trovarle come le lascio” (Lorenzo to the Count of Urbino and the Duke of Calabria, December 6, 1479, in Malavolti, part iii. l. iv. f. 76 r^o). Leo (ii. 237) has reprinted this letter whole from Malavolti.

the evening of the day he sent off this letter, he called a meeting in the palace of the Ten of a committee of forty of the chief citizens, not to take their advice, but to communicate his intention to them.¹ This is the way of absolute sovereigns; but the insecure usurper gave the motive of his resolve. "Florence needs peace," he said, "for the allies are not doing their duty. Since they feign to make war on me alone, it is for me to go in search of peace. When my enemies will have me in their power in Naples, we shall see if it is I alone they aim at." He was full of confidence for the rest, though he none the less recommended his family and his house to those present.² Opinion differed considerably, but no one dared to express blame or offer unsolicited advice.³ Rather Lorenzo gave nobody time to do so. The moment he finished speaking he left the palace. He had been playing Decius well enough to dupe his compatriots and the princes,⁴ if not the Venetians, who were judiciously convinced of a prearranged agreement between him and the Aragonese.⁵

Dec ⁶ That same evening he left Florence.⁶ On the next day (December 7) he wrote from San Miniato al Tedesco to the Signory, excusing himself for not having spoken to them, on the plea that actions, and not words, were wanting: a bad reason, since he had spoken to less qualified persons. Already he was creating and developing the legend of a victim, offer-

¹ "Non ricercava lo consigliassino, ma solamente che lo sapessero" (Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir.*, c. vi. vol. iii. p. 56).

² Guicciardini, *ibid.*, p. 56; Ammirato, xxiv. 143.

³ "I pareri furono in se varii, nondimeno perchè gli aveva detto non ci ricercare drento consiglio, nessuno lo contradisse" (Guicciardini, *ibid.*, p. 57).

⁴ Ercole of Este wrote to his orator, Antonio Montecatino, December 22, that nobody quite knew why Lorenzo went to Naples or what would be the result. He continued: "Ne avvivate di alcuni discorsi che vi fate con lo intelletto di quello che abbia a seguire in quella magnifica città o tornando o non tornando il M^o Lorenzo. . . . Starete attento di intendere quello si sentirà lì de la sua arrivata a Napoli, e de l'onore gli sarà stato fatto e de le opere sue" (*Atti e memorie*, &c., p. 252).

⁵ The Signory of Venice wrote in this tone to Louis XI., December 14, 1479. See Buser, p. 216 and 217, on Louis's opinion. Malavolti, who published Lorenzo's letter, recognises the understanding. Cf. Capponi, ii. 138, and Reumont, i. 487.

⁶ Allegretti, xxiii. 797.

ing himself for sacrifice to turn aside the wrath of powerful enemies.¹ How could they have given him credit for this? From Pisa, the 10th, he announced the arrival of the Neapolitan galleys, commanded by one of Calabria's intimates, and his intention to embark the following night. He spoke humbly and recommended himself to God.² The *balie* of the Ten of War, of which he was a member, pursued him to Leghorn to offer him the commission of orator to the King of Naples, a commission they wanted to ask of the Council of the Hundred, but they did not dare lest it should be refused, which would have made a bad impression.³

Lorenzo reached Naples on December 18.⁴ Hardly had his foot touched shore when it was evident that he was received as a friend. The second son and grandson of the King awaited him. He was welcomed with every honour.⁵ Such was the King's reception of him that he felt assured of peace, and wrote to Florence to this effect; but he was mistaken. The question dragged slowly, either because Ferrante feared to offend the Pope, or because he was waiting to see if Lorenzo's departure would cause any commotion in his country.

It was a splendid opportunity certainly. However degraded

¹ This letter may be read in Roscoe, i. 296; *Atti e memorie, &c.*, p. 239; *Lettere de' principi*, i. 3, Venice, 1581.

² "Giantomaso Caraffa del Conte di Matalone, e Prinzivalle de Gennaro, la conditione del quale appresso del duca di Calabria credo vi sia nota. Sono venuti per accompagnarmi, benchè sia compagnia da honorare molto maggior huomo che non sono io. A Dio piaccia condurmi e ricondurmi a salvamento et con qualche frutto" (Lorenzo to Antonio Montecatino, Pisa, December 10, in *Atti e memorie, &c.*, p. 240).

³ Decemviri collegæ tui oratorem te post discessum tuum ad Neapolitanum regem statuerunt. Idem quoque novi decemviri decreverunt. Putabam autem posse id fieri a centumviris honoratius, sed quibusdam amicis id attentare non est visum, in quorum ego sententiam facile concessi, quod in tanta suspensione animorum atque expectatione rerum quid melius factu sit non est facile cognoscere" (Bartolommeo Scala to Lorenzo, in Roscoe, Append. 30, vol. iii. p. 224). Roscoe dates this letter December 5, but this is an error, as Lorenzo only left on the 6th, as we see in Allegretti (xxiii. 797).

⁴ Account of Fil. Strozzi in Capponi, ii. 523, Append. 4; Malavolti, part 3, l. 4, f. 76 r°; Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir.*, c. vi. vol. iii. p. 57.—Upon the voyage, Allegretti, xxiii. 797; Jacopo of Volterre, xxiii. 100.

⁵ Nic. Valori, *Vita Laurentii*, p. 34.

were the Florentines, there were still malcontents among them.¹ In want of a chief, they thought to find one in Girolamo Morelli, that scolding friend, who always had advice ready when it was not asked for—a man of importance who had once been ambassador at Milan, and who was then one of the Ten of War. The rash dared to say that it was not well that a handful of men should offer themselves in place of the councils for the distribution of taxes. The wary contented themselves with expressing a fear for Lorenzo's fate. They recalled Piccinino's disaster, perhaps in the hope of suggesting a second murder. In the councils they opposed the proposals of Lorenzo's partisans. They affected to be disquieted by the Duke of Calabria's presence on the Siennese frontier, and to be indignant at the news that Agostino Fregoso, in contempt of the truce, had surprised Sarzana, sold a long while ago by his father, Lodovico, to the Florentines.² Without a recognised chief, as Morelli held back, and without fixed intentions, they were scarcely formidable.³ But we do not always fear by the measure of reason for fear: letters of alarm begged Lorenzo to hurry back.

In spite of a corresponding desire, Lorenzo thought fit to dissimulate, and he dissimulated as a man does whose natural talent inclines that way. He sought to please, and he pleased the court by his banquets and festivities,⁴ the people by the magnificence of his equipages, and everybody by his presents and liberality. He dowered a host of young girls who implored him to do so; he bought off a hundred captives from the galleys, and gave them each ten golden florins, as well as a suit of clothes and hose of green cloth.⁵ King Ferrante, so reticent by nature, observed him closely to discover his mind,

¹ See above, p. 292 *seq.*, 342.

² *Diar. Parm.*, xxii. 327; Machiavelli, viii. 125 B; Ammirato, xxiv. 143.

³ Thus judged Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir.*, c. vi. vol. iii. p. 59; Machiavelli, viii. 126 A; Sismondi, vii. 169; Capponi, ii. 137.

⁴ See a gracious letter addressed to Lorenzo by Hippolita of Aragon, the King's daughter-in-law, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 223.

⁵ *Diar. Parm.*, xxii. 335; Nic. Valori, *Vita Laurentii*, p. 35; Ammirato, xxiv. 144.

tried to captivate him by fine speeches and amiable manners, by the justness and depth of his political views, which Michele Bruto resumed in a solemn harangue.¹ Did he foresee an approaching French invasion? Doubtless not. Louis XI. still reigned, and the future Charles VIII. was only a child. But he had good reason to aim at a Florentine alliance, as the age and health of Sixtus IV. prognosticated a near election, and the new Pope, according to custom, would adopt a policy quite opposed to his predecessor's, and in consequence lean upon the side of Florence. It remained to be seen if the Florentines were heart and soul with Lorenzo. Upon this question their peaceable attitude during a long absence seemed convincing. Thus the negotiations were prolonged for two months.

In the various courts there was plenty of surmise on the subject. Sixtus IV., above all, was disturbed. The honour of the Holy See, he wrote to his ally of Naples, will only be safe if Lorenzo comes to Rome to humiliate himself, which the prince who holds him in his power should exact.² This was a concession on the part of the Pontiff, once so eager to have Lorenzo expelled from Florence. What was the use of expelling him if, like his grandfather, he was destined to return? Unable to fight alone, Sixtus made a virtue of necessity, and forewent "the triumph, the satisfaction of expelling the tyrant, and of restoring freedom to the Florentine people, and peace and repose to all Italy." But Lorenzo refused the *amende honorable* to Rome, the minimum it exacted by pontifical self-respect, and solicited by Ferrante. "He must be forced," said Sixtus, "since we have him in our power." Was it possible? He hardly thought so himself, as, having thus covered his retreat, he ended by endorsing the pardon after having, as he mournfully wrote, exhausted a well of gold to obtain this victory that had escaped him.³

¹ M. Bruto, l. vii., in Burm., vol. viii. part 1, p. 176. Sismondi (vii. 167) gives a *résumé* of the harangue.

² Antonio Crivelli's commission from Sixtus IV., who sent him to Naples, February 1480, published by Capponi, ii. 524, Append. 5, from a MS. in his library.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 526, 527.

Lorenzo scented these underhand dealings, and suspected their opposition to his own; but ignoring their main point, he deemed a hasty departure from Naples prudent. He reached Gaëta on March 1, 1480. Ferrante sent a long letter after him begging him to return. What did he fear? The Pope would grant him every possible security. Did it not look as if the state of Florentine affairs had precipitated his departure? None of his friends would be surprised or shocked by his return to Naples, above all, when he could announce the conclusion of peace as imminent.¹

Lorenzo well knew through his correspondents that there was nothing to fear in Florence,² but too delighted to have got out of the hole, he was deaf to all prayers to re-enter it, and went on his way. In despair the King sent a messenger after him to obtain his signature to the treaty already signed by the royal hand. He added his name, and peace was promulgated (March 25) in all the contracting States.³ On that day, the Feast of the Annunciation, and the first day of the Florentine year, a grand procession of thanksgiving took place in Florence. All the same, Rinuccini writes, "The people did not appear much rejoiced or consoled by it, for it is said that the treaty contains many secret articles neither useful nor honourable to our unhappy city."⁴

If this is the language of the opposition, speaking ill in the privacy of its *Ricordi*, it is noteworthy that the opposition is persistent in the hour of success, when the population, greedy

¹ The King's letter is dated from Castello Novo in Naples, March 1, 1480. It is to be found in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 213, and in Roscoe, iii. p. 226, Append. 3.

² Letters of Agnolo de la Stufa, undated; of Antonio Pucci, January 11, 1480. Pucci begs Lorenzo to conclude with the King if he cannot with the Pope, and he adds, "La città si riposa bene; qui non si senter innovazione alcuna" (Fabroni, *Doc.*, pp. 207, 210, 213). "Tutto il popolo dubitava che el Re nollo lasciassi tornare a sua posta. . . . Idio l'aiutò" (Luca Landucci, *Diario*, pp. 33, 34).

³ The authors do not agree regarding date of signature. Ammirato (xxiv. 145) says March 6; Malavolti (part iii. l. 4, f. 76^{ro}), Allegretti (xxiii. 798), Rinuccini, (p. 131), the 13th; Cipolla (p. 602), the 17th. Rinuccini adds that the news reached Florence on the 17th. This proves the date 13th probable. The *Diario Parmense* (xxii. 336) dates the promulgation the 25th.

⁴ Al. Rinuccini, p. 131.

of rest, was thankful to the master who assured it, and whose power it consolidated out of sheer gratitude. The conditions of peace, when known, were found to be without glory or conspicuous advantage. Lorenzo only obtained the support of the King by an annual payment of sixty thousand florins to the Duke of Calabria. He did not even obtain restitution of the places taken from the Republic, such restitution depending upon the royal will. Finally, he made a cruel sacrifice of his own feelings in freeing those of the Pazzi still detained in the tower of Volterra, although they had taken no part in the conspiracy.¹

To have paid so dearly for peace proves either that he yielded to the pressure of public opinion, or that in this matter he singularly lacked foresight. The Duke of Calabria, even more than he, desired an understanding to strengthen his position in Sienna, where he was, and the opportunity to march later towards the conquest of Tuscany, the old dream of the kings of Naples, whose realisation, thrice attempted,² this peace seemed to facilitate. Twenty years earlier Florence was indignant and frightened because the Neapolitans acquired a few miserable castles in the Tuscan Maremma, and now she not only saw them permanently installed at her gates, but she authorised them to remain there. If matters were settled afterwards, it was by one of those chances that escape human foresight. How could Lorenzo have foreseen that Sienna would soon be so dissatisfied with her new masters that she would offer Venice the command of her destiny,³ and, above all, that a near invasion of the kingdom of Naples by the Turks would free Florence of all fear for Sienna? Mr. Trollope is right; the third of the Medici was a lucky man.

¹ Luca Landucci, p. 33; Nardi, l. i. vol. i. p. 25; Machiavelli, viii. 126 A; Ammirato, xxiv. 145.

² In 1446, 1452, 1456.

³ See Brosch, *Papst Julius II.*, p. 303, doc. of May 24, 1481; Jacopo of Volterra, xxiii. 108; Malavolti, part iii. l. 5, f. 78; Machiavelli, vii. 126 B; Ammirato, xxiv. 144; Sismondi, vii. 171; Cipolla, p. 602.

He and Ferrante agreed, what could the other combatants do but follow suit? Lodovico il Moro was quite ready to do so; Ercole of Este likewise, though he recommended Lorenzo not to neglect the friendship of Milan,¹ and to abstain from going to Rome, where he would run some danger.² Sixtus IV. scolded, complained that he had not been consulted, but he bowed to necessity. His orator, Lorenzo Giustini, granted his approbation to the treaty without any special authorisation, and the Pope did not dare to erase his name.³ As for Venice, if she remained outside, she had full liberty to accede, but she did not care about it. She would have liked to prevent this new grouping of Italian forces, that might prove perilous for her. She profited, however, by the Pope's ill-humour to conclude with him in April a separate league, big with fresh wars. The captain-general of this league was Count Riario,⁴ and his lieutenant was René II., with a salary of two thousand ducats a month.⁵

Whenever absolute powers have any success abroad, we may feel sure that they will profit by it to do at home what would be otherwise difficult, if even they have not sought the prestige of triumph with this object. "Our city was never in such danger of losing its freedom," wrote Machiavelli.⁶ The second act of the comedy was the long meditated execution of domestic projects.

The admitted aim of reform, or rather the sort of *coup d'état* about to be attempted by Lorenzo, was a new organisation of the monte delle doti—the secret aim, the appropriation of its

¹ "Perchè sono due stati che troppo si affanno insieme e sone attissimi a conservarsi l'uno con l'altro" (Desp. to Ant. Montecatino, Ferrara, March 19, 1480. *Atti e memorie*, p. 253).

² "Per fuggire ogni pericolo" (Desp. of April 20, 1480; *ibid.*, p. 253).

³ Jacopo of Volterra, xxiii. 100, 105.

⁴ April 17, 1480. Sanuto, xxii. 1211; Malipieri, *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., vol. vii. p. 250; Romanin, iv. 394. Cf. doc. of March 23, 1480, in Ugolini, *Storia dei Conti e Duchi d'Urbino*, i. 514.

⁵ Romanin, iv. 394, who quotes *Commemoriali*, xvi. p. 154, document on the pay received, signed "Renè, by Mgr. the Duke and his counsel, Fontaines."

⁶ Machiavelli, viii. 126 B.

funds. Rinuccini stated it formally,¹ and he stated the truth, since later, at Lorenzo's death, the people rushed to Antonio Miniati's house, the *proveditore* of the *monte*, and the master's right hand in this affair, to seize the private books which contained the proofs of these financial jobberies.²

Lorenzo did not regard himself as sufficiently armed to carry them out on a larger scale in all security. He ⁽¹⁾ certainly had in his service the famous *accoppiatori*, who knew how to arrange and dip into the bourses, and who kept the new places of the Signory for reliable friends, permitting them to do nothing without orders from the Medici palace, ⁽²⁾ and by the intermediary of the Gonfalonier of Justice.³ But the *balie* only exercised a temporary power, and could not be prolonged or created by mere will. The monarchical instinct once awakened called for permanent institutions. At a time of peace, when the *balie* of the Ten of War, in which was concentrated all power in a period of strife,⁴ ceased to exercise its functions, Lorenzo wanted to secure a permanent intermediary between himself and the public offices.

He did not give himself the trouble of invention. He was content to walk in the beaten track, and constituted a new council, which, without suppressing any of the others, would be consulted before them, and would, in consequence, take the lead. In olden times, a meeting of Parliament would have been called for such a work; on this occasion, April 8, 1480, scarcely returned from Naples, Lorenzo, without ringing the bells, without following any of the usual formalities, called a meeting of friends, which Rinuccini regarded as a Parliament,⁵

¹ Al. Rinuccini, p. 147.

² Nardi (i. 26, 27) gives curious details concerning these jobberies. Cf. Certani's MS. history, quoted by Capponi, note to the documents at the end of this letter of Jacopo Pitti, *Arch. Stor.*, 1st. ser., vol. i. p. 318.

³ Cambi, *Del.*, xxi. 2.

⁴ Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir.*, c. vi. vol. iii. p. 62.

⁵ "Sanza suono di campana o altra dimostrazione feciono, si può dire, un parlamento" (Al. Rinuccini, p. 131). Rinuccini's authority is pre-eminent, as he was a member of the permanent *balie*. We may by this believe that in every-day life he did not express such ill-humour or opposition as we so often see in his *Ricordi*.

a fact that cannot be construed into praise of this ancient method of forcing the game. These friends or partners adopted and passed on the same day through the Council of the Hundred, and afterwards on the 9th and 10th, by councils of the people and the commons, a resolution to the effect that the Lords, with a majority of six beans, should nominate thirty citizens for the election, conjointly with the Signory and the colleges, of a balie of 210 members under thirty years of age, who, consequently, had only known of the old system by hearsay, and could not greatly regret it. To these 210 elected would be joined the Thirty, the Lords, and colleges, to form a new balie, which would last until June 30, with the full authority of the three usual councils,¹ and with the essential point, the right to delegate all powers to a lesser number if they thought fit.² Naturally, they were to think it fit, and did so.

In the month of November they were to undertake the customary task of the *squittinio*, that is, to form the bourses, and inscribe the names of the Florentines eligible for office.³ Lorenzo having reflected, feared lest a too small number of councillors might become a dangerous, or, at any rate, a disturbing oligarchy: he wanted the Thirty to have the right to add forty new colleagues to their number for these delicate operations (April 19).⁴ Thus was created a body of seventy members, who admitted the minor arts in the same proportion as the other offices,⁵ who were to appoint all the public servants, who made the *squittinio* last four years,⁶ who received the exorbitant right of replacing themselves those of their members

¹ That is, the Councils of the Hundred, of the people, and the commons.

² "E oltre a questo potessino dare qualunque autorità et alia a minore numero di cittadini, come a loro paresse" (Al. Rinuccini, p. 131. Cf. Cambi, *Del.*, xxi. 2).

³ The same, and Capponi, notes to J. Pitti, *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., i. 316.

⁴ For this nomination the Thirty should add forty-eight citizens to their number, twelve by quarter. See Rinuccini, p. 131, 132. The decree of April 19 may be read in the *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., i. 329.

⁵ Decree of April 19, in *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., i. 329 sq.

⁶ Cambi, *Del.*, xxi. 3.

carried off by death or other means;¹ the institution thus became permanent to eternity. Lorenzo evidently thought that instruments elected for life² would have and could have no other interest than his own. He divided them into two sections, each in turn acting for six months. This Council became the chief wheel of the State, almost the only important one.

It soon eclipsed the Council of a Hundred, which in turn had eclipsed the old Councils of the people and the commons, the corner-stone of the Republic. It was not suppressed, suppression being repugnant to the Florentine mind; it was annulled after deciding that to nominate its members, the Seventy, as well as the past and future³ Gonfaloniers of justice, all friends of the first class, should meet, and that, instead of being consulted before the two ancient Councils, already half effaced, it should only be consulted after them.⁴ This was giving fifth rank to *one* of the four carriage-wheels. Indeed, among themselves the ranks were confused;⁵ the coach no longer ran upon its own wheels; one man alone dragged or carried it away by his own strength, and by the force of acquired speed; two means that cannot count upon time.

After Lorenzo, the Seventy were so completely the sole

¹ J. Pitti, l. i. *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., i. 25, and Capponi, Notes to Documents, *ib.*, p. 316. The document contains restrictions upon the number of each family or *consorteria* that could be admitted simultaneously into the Council of Seventy (*ibid.*, pp. 330, 334). Only two families were exempt of all *divieto* in this question. "I imagine," Capponi, so grave, maliciously writes, "that one was the Medici, and the other some obscure and unimportant family" (Capponi, ii. 143).

² "Feciono che questi 70 ciptadini stessino a vita, e fussi un altro chonsiglio della cipta" (Cambi, *Del.*, xxi. 3). Cf. Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir.*, c. vi. vol. iii. p. 62).

³ Al. Rinuccini, p. 133. The future Gonfaloniers were known, as the names of those desirable for office were placed in a special bourse.

⁴ Decree of April 19, p. 330; Rinuccini, p. 132; Cambi, *Del.*, xxi. 3; J. Pitti, *loc. cit.*, p. 25, 26. "Che hogni provixione che sordinava savessi prima a vincere per questo chonsiglio de' 70, e di poi pel chonsiglio del popolo e di poi pel chonsiglio del comune, e di poi pel chonsiglio del ciento" (Cambi, *Del.*, xxi. 3).

⁵ March 6, 1482, Filippo Sacramoro, orator of Milan, wrote to his master that the day before a provision of 300,000 ducats was allowed him for two years, first by the Council of Seventy, then the Councils of the Signory and the Colleges, then the Council of a Hundred, all on the same day, contrary to custom. He makes no mention of the Councils of the people and the commons (*Arch. Sforz.*, copies, MS., 1610, f. 320).

power, that they at once appointed the twelve procurators charged with levying the taxes, governing the *monte*, overlooking the *mercanzia* and the consulates,¹ nominating the Eight of balie, whose authority spread over civil and criminal questions,² and even every six months electing the Eight, who were practically but quietly substituted for the Ten of War—not quite suppressed, but reduced to a merely decorative state.

We must add one last feature if we would realise the full value of this Machiavellian mechanism. No private person had the right to present a proposition or even a petition to the Seventy. Everything should proceed through the Lords, following the established rule;³ but as the Lords were dependent upon this Senate, matters began and ended with it. The supreme ambition now was to reach it: the other offices were only regarded as stepping-stones.

Armed with this precious instrument, Lorenzo, like the Ten of Venice, was able to have a secret policy, and this was henceforth the reason of his strength abroad. But, at first, the formidable innovation was not approved of at home. The citizens, Cambi wrote, are degraded, and have become the servants of those who have the giving of office.⁴ Rinuccini declared that all liberty was crushed, that the people were reduced to slavery; he speaks of the insolence and tyranny of Lorenzo, and of the execution of three citizens for having wanted to cut him in pieces.⁵ Jacopo Pitti, who was not a contemporary,⁶ but saw matters from a near point of view, says that this creation and all these measures were received with general dissatisfaction.⁷ The courtier Ammirato, who

¹ Document in *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., i. 334.

² *Ibid.*, and Capponi, ii. 143.

³ Capponi, ii. 143.

⁴ Cambi, *Del.*, xxi. 3.

⁵ Al. Rinuccini, p. 132–135. Rinuccini says it is true that these three had conspired with the exiles and Count Girolamo Riario; but the important fact was their feeling for Lorenzo.

⁶ Jacopo Pitti was born January 26, 1519.

⁷ “Con malissima satisfazione dell’ universale” (J. Pitti, l. i., *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., i. 25).

softens the glaring tints of the picture, does not dare to deny that Cosimo's grandson "imperceptibly controlled public affairs and the authority of the laws, and ended by meeting with no opposition when he seized everything."¹

Meanwhile the negotiations with the Italian powers were continued, and new alliances were formed: on the one side, the Pope, Venice, and the Duke of Anjou;² on the other, B Naples, Milan, Ferrara, Florence, united by a new treaty³ and the marriage of Hippolita, Calabria's daughter, with Gian Galeaz.⁴ Hence, in spite of all Lorenzo's embassies, the noticeable coldness of Louis XI., who, though he might not exercise his rights over Naples, was not ready to give them up.⁵ The interdict and excommunication continued to weigh upon Florence with a severity intolerable in a time of peace; the only concession they had obtained from the rancorous Pope was the cessation of war.

Nothing less than the descent of the Turks on the Neapolitan side of the Adriatic could move him. Mahomet II. had seen well enough that the divisions in Italy furnished him with a favourable opportunity, and even promised him Italian allies. There was no possible agreement between the Venetian, Roman, and Neapolitan navies any more than with Florence, who, besides, had never been a maritime power; on the contrary, there was no doubt of an agreement between Venice and the Sultan. The Serene Republic was already suspected,⁶ and a Turkish ambassador formally accused her of having

¹ "Tirando pian piano a se le faccende pubbliche, e insiememente l'autorità delle leggi, non trovando alla fine più contrasto del tutto si fosse insignorito" (Amirato, xxiv. 145).

² See *supra*, p. 341.

³ July 25, 1480; Cipolla, p. 602, n. 6.

⁴ See doc. of Dec. 28, 1479, in Rosmini, *Storia di Milano*, iv. 173, Milan, 1820; Cipolla, p. 602, n. 7.

⁵ Buser, p. 219; Cipolla, p. 603.

⁶ The suspicion is not doubtful, as may be seen in Sanuto (xxii. 1213), Navagero (xxiii. 1165), Machiavelli (viii. 126 B), who did not know of the documents. This suspicion was natural, since quite recently Venice had concluded a peace with the Turks and refused to take part against them.

suggested the idea of the expedition.¹ She defended herself on the shores of the Bosphorus, where she ordered her orator to press forward the "enterprise of the gulf,"² proposing the Pope René of Lorraine as captain-general of the Christian league.³ But hidden documents have now come to light, and we find that the Venetian admiral, Vettor Soranzo, had orders, should the Ottoman fleet attack Naples, to retreat to Corfu, to guard that island, save the Republican vessels, and preserve peace with the Crescent.⁴

The Florentines were also accused of connivance,⁵ but so far we have no proof of it. At any rate, Lorenzo, despite his relations with Naples, did not appear much alarmed by the threat of an infidel fleet bearing down upon the Italian shores.⁶ Through his compatriot merchants, he was upon easy and friendly terms with Mahomet II. Since he had obtained the extradition of Bandini, he was regarded as able to do anything with him.

However this may be, towards the end of August, while the Grand-master of Rhodes, D'Aubusson,⁷ was repulsing a Turkish fleet, the Grand Vizier, Keduk Ahmed, with a hundred vessels, bore down upon Albania opposite Otranto, as if to punish

¹ Capponi, ii. 140. This writer alleges a MS. letter of Pier Capponi, dated Naples, April 18, 1483, and addressed to the Ten. He does not say where it is to be found—probably among his family papers.

² *Secreta*, p. 99, 102, in Romanin, iv. 396.

³ Sanuto, xxii. 1211.

⁴ Despatch of March 23, 1480. *Secreta*, p. 86, in Romanin, l. xi. c. iii. vol. iv. p. 385.

⁵ "Tra quei che ciò procurarono, dissero i Ragonesi essere stati i Fiorentini" (Camillo Porzio, *La congiura de' Baroni del Regno di Napoli contra il Re Ferdinando I.*, f. 2 r^o, Rome, 1615). Capponi (ii. p. 140, n. 4) distrusts the testimony of this writer, careless about facts, as he says. But Porzio only reports the impressions of the Aragonese.

⁶ Nothing clear can be made of a letter written July 12, 1480, by the Signory (or the Ten) to Guidantonio Vespucci, ambassador to Louis XI., to inform him of the movement of the Turks. "Tout reste en suspens, est-il dit avec une extrême froideur, rien de décidé." See text in Desjardins, i. 186.

⁷ Epist. Petri d'Aubusson ad Pontificem, Sept. 13, 1480, in *Ann. Eccles.*, 1480, § 2-13, vol. xxix. p. 606; Hammer, *Hist. de l'Empire Ottoman.*, trad. Dochez, Paris, 1840, l. xvii. vol. i. pp. 328-332. There is also an Italian translation of this work by Romanin. The other sources are indicated by Sismondi, vii. 176.

Ferrante for aid given the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, a natural result of the latter's close friendship with the Pope. Sixty Venetian sails accompanied him, presumably to prevent him from entering the gulf; but without even an effort, they allowed him to lay siege to Otranto (July 28), retreating to Corfu according to orders, to await the result.¹ It was rumoured that they supplied the besiegers with provisions.² The place capitulated on August 11, and the writers say that the Turks behaved barbarously. Were they worse than the Christians? Henceforth they had a foothold in the peninsula, and could devastate it at their will.³ King Ferrante informed the Pope that if the Church did not promptly send powerful assistance, he would treat with the Turks and make the way clear for their march upon Rome.⁴

This catastrophe, which upset all Italy, according to Lorenzo gave it breathing space. So he wrote to Louis XI. four days later,⁵ and from the Florentine point of view he was right. Florence was not the first state threatened by the invasion. The Duke of Calabria, recalled by his father, abandoned Sienna, where he occupied so many places,⁶ to the vengeance, the claims, and conquests of the neighbouring Republic; while the king of Naples, March 1481, went so far as to insist upon the Siennese yielding spontaneously, so that Florence, should she declare war upon them in her own interest, would not have an excuse to refuse him the assistance he hoped for against the Turk.⁷ On the other hand,

¹ Sanuto, xxii. 1213; Malipieri, *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., vii. 130.

² *Diar. Parm.*, xxii. 379.

³ *Histoire de l'Empire Othoman*, by Demetrius Cantimir, Prince of Moldavia, trans. by M. de Jonquières, Canon of Montpellier, Paris, 1743, vol. iii. p. 29; Ammirato, xxiv. 146; Sismondi, vii. 177.

⁴ Sanuto, xxii. 1213; Sismondi, vii. 178.

⁵ "Essendo quietate queste nostre cose d'Italia in gran parte. . . Senza dubitatione questa pace e quiete d'Italia abbiamo pel caldo e favore la S. M. ne ha fatto" (Lorenzo to G. Vespucci, Aug. 15, 1480. Text in Desjardins, i. 187).

⁶ Among others, Colle, Poggibonsi, Poggio Imperiale, Montesansovino, Monte Domenichi, La Castellina, San Polo.

⁷ Alleghetti, xxiii. 808; Malavolti, part iii. l. v. f. 79 v°; Machiavelli, viii. 127 B.

Sixtus IV., who until then had refused Lorenzo pardon until he should prostrate himself at his feet, consented to receive ambassadors from him. Twelve were appointed on November 4, 1480.¹ Their instructions were, that if his Holiness did not grant absolution without delay, if he demanded money before raising the interdict, if any particular person were exempted from pardon—this meant Lorenzo—they were instantly to leave Rome.² Lorenzo felt that, owing to circumstances, he could take a high hand.

The ambassadors entered Rome by night, and were received in a private audience on the 25th November. Afterwards, December 3, the First Sunday of Advent, they met under the portico of St. Peter. The Pope and all his cardinals came, the grand entrance remaining closed behind him. Seated, he addressed the prostrated Florentines a speech, in which, among other graceful remarks, he advised them “not like dogs to return to their vomit.”³ The customary formalities followed. The Pontiff took the rod from the Grand Penitentiary and struck each ambassador upon the shoulder, each of whom bowed his head and recited a verse from the *Miserere*. Then they were allowed to kiss the Pope’s foot and received the blessing. The grand entrance was opened; Sixtus IV. was conducted to the high altar, and in his train the whipped Florentines entered under the sacred vault.⁴

Their master and their country were reconciled to the Church.

How was it that the head of the Church did not seize this moment, instead of a later, to force the Republic to arm fifteen

¹ The names of these ambassadors may be found in Rinuccini, p. 134, and Cipolla, p. 602.

² See these instructions in Fabroni, Doc., p. 219. Capponi (ii. 144) gives a half page of the text.

³ “Nolite, ut canes, redire ad vomitum.” (See this speech in *Ann. Eccl.*, 1480, § 40, vol. xxix. p. 619, from Jacopo of Volterra (xxiii. 114), who was present at the ceremony.)

⁴ All these absurdities were still practised in Henry IV.’s time, for whom Duperron and D’Ossat received absolution. See our work, *L’Eglise et l’État sous le règne de Marie de Médicis*, vol. i. p. 132, Paris, 1872.

galleys against the Turks? Perhaps he would have obtained it then.¹

All is well that ends well. When Florence had recovered her lost possessions upon the Siennese frontier, and seen her enemy, the Duke of Calabria, detained for a long time in the south; when she had recovered the right of assisting at the "functions" or ceremonies, and of receiving the sacraments of a religion whose dogmas she sneered at, this town, "greedy of speech," Machiavelli says, "which judges facts by success and not by counsel, changed its mind, raised Lorenzo to the skies, saying that his good luck had made him gain by peace what bad luck had made him lose through war."² This was not quite just. Resolution and cleverness had prepared and merited luck, for God only helps those who help themselves, and we only gain in a game by having a stake in it. Lorenzo was a clever player and a wily politician. That was why, in spite of many accidents, of many deceptions and sources of disquiet, he ended his days in the plenitude of the power that his grandfather had bequeathed him, and which his son compromised and finally lost.

¹ Jacopo of Volterra, xxiii. 113-115; *Ann. Eccl., loc. cit.*; Machiavelli, viii. 127 A; Ammirato, xxiv. 146; Reumont, i. 512; Capponi, ii. 141; Cipolla, p. 602.

² Machiavelli, viii. 127 B.

CHAPTER IV.

LORENZO DE' MEDICIS FROM HIS RECONCILIATION WITH THE HOLY SEE TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ITALIAN EQUILIBRIUM.

1480-1491.

Papal intrigues to create a principality for Riario Sforza (1480)—The Ferrara war (May 3, 1482)—The two leagues—Campaign of 1482—Incapacity—Death of the captains—Vain efforts to gather a council—Peace concluded (December 12)—Discontent of the Florentines—Diet of Cremona (February 28, 1484)—Projects for territorial enlargement—Enterprise against Sarzana (September 1484)—Taking of Pietrasanta by the Florentines (November 8)—Pontificate of Innocent VIII.—War of the Holy See against the King of Naples (1485)—Lorenzo's difficulty—Peace debated in the Sacred College (March 1486)—French embassy in Italy (May)—Peace concluded (August 11)—Duplicity of Lorenzo—Genoese campaign against Sarzana (1487)—Florentine victory and siege of Sarzana (April 13)—Capitulation of Sarzana (June 22)—Misunderstanding between Milan and Florence on the subject of Genoa—Genoa in the hands of the Milanese (August 1488)—Negotiation for the marriage of one of Lorenzo's daughters with Franceschetto Cybo, and the nomination of one of his sons to the cardinalate (1486-1489)—The contract signed (January 20, 1488)—Death of Clarissa, Lorenzo's wife (July)—The hat granted (March 9, 1489) and given back (March 10, 1492)—Girolamo Riario assassinated (April 14, 1488)—Accusations against Lorenzo—The widow joins his family—Galeotto Manfredi assassinated (May 31, 1488)—Lorenzo, protector of Faenza, Imola, and Forli, mediation between the powers—His greatness abroad.

LORENZO'S safeguard was war around Otranto, which kept the Turk at sea. The energy and talents of Mahomet might have prolonged the struggle, had not his death on May 3, 1481, brought it to a brusque end. An armed rivalry between his two sons, Bajazet II. and Djem, enabled Sixtus IV. to recall his fleet and the Duke of Calabria to reconquer the lost town, August 10.¹ The centre of agitation was carried back to the north. Like a tender father, the Pope had only one idea—to make the whole of Romagna the appanage of Count Girolamo. To the principality of Imola, prey of the sensational parasite, he

¹ Navagero, xxiii. 1168; Jacopo de Volterra, xxiii. 148-152, who especially gives the discourses; Sismondi, viii. 184.

had already joined that of Forli (September 4, 1480), taken from the Ordelaffi, who possessed it for a hundred and fifty years. Whether through want of political spirit or through diverted attention, the Italian states had allowed this flagrant wrong.¹ Would Riario now get Faenza? The Ten of Venice were not opposed to it.² They even allowed that there was a question of the conquest of Naples. It was, they said, a design or a project to be duly weighed and kept secret.³ To ripen these agreeable reflections, the ambitious Riario had himself sent to Venice under pretext of strengthening the alliance,⁴ and there he was received with greater honour, writes one of his ministers in Lorenzo's pay, than would have been rendered to the Emperor.⁵ In siding with an aged Pope, the Republic of the Lagoons hoped upon his death to profit by the geographical alterations to which she lent herself. Thus was inaugurated the enterprise against the Duke of Ferrara, of all the princelings the easiest to pluck.⁶

A pretext was wanting; Venice found several. She remembered having possessed Ferrara in 1308. She was vexed by the recent marriage of Ercole d'Este and Leonora, Ferrante's daughter. She complained that a vidame, whom she supported in Ferrara for the protection of her subjects, had, upon

¹ Jacopo de Volterra, xxiii. 111, 112; *Diar. Parm.*, xxii. 345; Sanuto, xxii. 1211; Sismondi, vii. 185.

² "Si forte intelligenitis D. Comitem Hieronymum aspirare ad statum Faventie sicut aspiravit. . . Respondeatis Dominum nostrum esse contentum" (Jan. 27, 1481). The Council of Ten to Zach. Barbaro, orator to Rome, in Brosch, *Papst Julius II.*, p. 305, n. 50.

³ "Reliquum est ut ad eam partem aliquid dicamus, que continent verba vobiscum D. Comitum super regno et super expulsionem regis, etc., que verba et cogitata visa nobis sunt digniora maximo silentio et taciturnitate quam conferimento et consultatione . . . bono gravi et modesto modo cum vobis acciderit hortamini D. Comitem ut conceptum suum in illa materia cum nemine omnino aperiat aut aliquem nutum faciat" (November 9, 1480, to Barbaro, *ibid.*, p. 305, n. 51).

⁴ Jacopo de Volterra, xxiii. 140; Sismondi, vii. 185.

⁵ Letter of Matteo, Archdeacon of Forli, to Lorenzo, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 226; Jacopo de Volterra, xxiii. 143; Pietro Cirneo, *Comment. de Bello ferrariensi*, xxi. 1195; Cipolla, p. 611.

⁶ Brosch, p. 22; Reumont, ii. 250; Cipolla, p. 611.

the question of a tax, been excommunicated by the bishop.¹ In vain did the Duke arrange the affair of the vidame: forbidden to manufacture salt in the lagoons of Comacchio, Venice annexed the territory of Ferrara and raised anew the question of the frontier, still in abeyance.² Involuntarily we think of La Fontaine's wolf and lamb.

On May 3, 1482, war was declared in the name of Venice, the Pope, and his favourite. But the time was past for localising it; interests had acquired a solidarity.³ Italy was soon aflame and divided in two camps. Genoa and the Marquis of Montferrat sided with Venice, Sixtus IV., and Riario; the King of Naples, the Duke of Milan, the Marquis of Mantua, Bentivoglio and Bologna, Lorenzo and Florence pronounced for Ferrara.⁴ The military chiefs on Ercole's side were Alphonsus of Calabria and the old Duke of Urbino, a great lover of the arts, who boasted of having nearly always won his battles; ⁵ on the Pope's, Roberto Malatesta, lord of Rimini, Urbino's son-in-law, and of a renown scarcely less than his; and for Venice, Roberto de San Severino, declared a rebel by Lodovico il Moro, whom he had made regent.⁶

The plan of Ferrara was that Urbino should attack the Venetian state in Lombardy, while Calabria would engage and detain the pontifical army in the neighbourhood of Rome.

¹ A part of a letter of July 10, 1481, in Romanin (vol. iv. p. 402, n. 3), which throws light upon this question. Cf. P. Cirneo, xxi. 1194; Sabellico, Dec., iv. l. i. p. 813.

² Cipolla, p. 612; Sismondi, vii. 187.

³ Antonio Montecatino, orator of Ercole d'Este in Florence, wrote to him later: "Appartiene a quelli M^{ci} Signori avere maggior cura di questo stato che del proprio, perchè, perduto questo, il loro anche andrà in ruina, e se bene si perdesse Ferrara, non resterà che il papa non sia papa, et non si curerà de la condizione futura de li successori; sicchè se quelli M^{ci} Signori desiderano di non andare in servitù nè loro nè i suoi figliuoli, bisogna che ci aiutino a conservare questa stato" (December 5, 1482, *Atti e memorie*, &c., i. p. 264).

⁴ Jacopo de Volterra, xxiii. 171; P. Cirneo, xxi. 1195-1201; Infessura, *Diar. Rom.*, vol. iii. part ii. p. 1149. After having vainly turned the Pope from this war, Lorenzo recalled his ambassadors from Rome: they left May 14.

⁵ Ricotti, iii. 229.

⁶ *Ann. Placent.*, xx. 964; Sismondi, vii. 191, 193, 196.

Lorenzo promised to aid Niccolò Vitelli to reconquer Città di Castello, while Antonio, Urbino's son, should attempt to regain Forli. Venice, upon her side, more active, already surrounded Ferrara with a circle of fire and sword. Her fleet and her army advanced towards Ravenna; Malatesta attacked Bagnacavallo; San Severino took Castelnuovo and Ficcarolo, following the left bank of the Po, after a short siege, which Urbino, Ercole, and Bentivoglio were unable to force him to raise.¹ Vespasiano, who belonged to the vanquished party, says that it was the finest campaign that had been seen in Italy for long.²

The innocent paper-maker was easy to astonish. The Florentines, in fact, dissented from Urbino's renown. On the other hand, the orator of Ferrara wrote,³ "Our league is wanting in sense." These malcontents were right. Upon plains broken by marshes, canals, torrents, and bridgeless rivers, whose mouth, encumbered by sand, caused the waters to flow below the level of their bed, with millions of little isles that breathe an air as damp as the stagnant waters that surrounded them,⁴ the armies remained isolated, seeking only their separate advantages, whence insignificant and worthless combats. The only risks of danger were the carelessness and inexperience of the leaders, and the infection, which during the year 1482 is said to have killed 20,000 men, among whom were three Florentine commissaries and the Duke of Urbino. The same day (September 10),

¹ Vespasiano, *Vita di Fed. d'Urbino*, c. 18, 19, 21; *Spicil. Rom.*, i. 115, 117; P. Cirneo, xxi. 1201; *Diario Ferrarese*, xxiv. 260; Sabellico, Dec. iv. l. i. p. 829; Sanuto, *Commentari della Guerra di Ferrara*, p. 28, Venice, 1829; Machiavelli, viii. 128 A; Ammirato, xxv. 150; Sismondi, vii. 191 sq. See also, on the incidents of war, Antonio Montecatino's despatches to Ercole d'Este, August 26 and 30, 1482, in *Atti e memorie*, &c., i. p. 261.

² *Vita di Fed. d'Urbino*, c. 19, *Spicil. Rom.*, i. 115.

³ "Non si contentano molto . . . ma pur con qualche riguardo lo calunianno, di non aver consultato e fatto quello si conveniva. . . . La nostra lega ha havuto carestia di senno" (Ant. Montecatino to Ercole d'Este, August 30, 1482, in *Atti e memorie*, &c., i. p. 260, 261).

⁴ The largest is the Isle of Rovigo, bounded by the Adige and the Po. See Sabellico, Dec. iv. l. i. f. 831; Sismondi, vii. 190; Reclus, *Géogr. Univ.*, i. 356-369.

Roberto Malatesta, conqueror of Calabria at Torre di Campomorto, near Velletri (August 21), died in Rome.¹

This double death of father and son-in-law was a stroke of fortune for Count Girolamo, as Malatesta's illegitimate son, who, according to the custom of this family, was his successor, was thus without protection, and it was a fine opportunity to seize the state of Rimini. Florence did not hesitate to uphold her dead enemy's son against the most formidable of her living enemies. She sent troops to him, but had less faith in her arms than in her negotiations.

Already Lorenzo had returned to the idea of the Council proposed by Louis XI. and accepted by the Emperor.² Rather, he stole the proposal of a preacher to reopen the Council of Bâle, that had never been closed. This preacher was a German Dominican, Archbishop of Krain, called Andreas. In Rome he had made acquaintance with the dungeons of St. Angelo because he had spoken against the Pope. His proposal had inflamed Ferrante and Lorenzo, as well as the Emperor. They all three sent delegates to Bâle,³ but Lorenzo's delegate, Baccio Ugolini, a veteran in diplomacy, on his arrival saw clearer than the others. No prelates arrived; the Pope energetically recalling the fact that he had already been promised at Mantua that no further Councils should be called.⁴

¹ Sabellico, Dec. iv. l. i. f. 832; *Diario Ferrarese*, xxiv. 263; Jacopo of Volterra, xxiii. 179; Navagero, xxiii. 1177; Sanuto, xxii. 1224; Allegretti, xxiii. 811; Infessura, *Diar. Rom.*, iii. part ii. p. 1157; Machiavelli, viii. 128 AB; Ammirato, xxv. 152; Ricotti, iii. 223.

² Sismondi, vii. 196; Capponi, ii. 148.

³ Lorenzo sent Baccio Ugolini, who arrived at Bâle, September 14, with a delegate from Milan. See Buser, *Append.*, p. 503. Upon this affair, Capponi (ii. 148) mentions Lorenzo's letters in the name of the Ten, dated September 21 and October 14, which may be found in the *Legazione Manoscritta di Pier Capponi a Napoli*, that is to say, among his family papers. He also quotes from those letters a few words which are an exhortation in a hypocritical religious tone to Pier Capponi to write to the Council. See also J. Burckhardt, *Erzbischof Andreas von Krain und der letzte Consilversuch in Basel, 1482-1484*, Bâle, 1852, and on this work a study of Reumont in *Arch. Stor.*, new ser. ii. part ii. p. 240.

⁴ "Il papa dice il Re non si aver potuto appellare, perchè già a Mantova quando si fue quella dieta al tempo di papa Pio, tutti li potentati d'Italia pro-

The Archbishop of Krain heaped stupidity upon stupidity, ready to yield to whomsoever would go security for him. To push on the affair, added Baccio, would be like giving medicine to a dead man. It was all said in the tone of pleasantry which he knew was agreeable to his master,¹ but at bottom he was very serious. The indiscreet and vapouring prelate was put in prison, and his process only ended when he was hanged.²

Peace could not come from this policy, and Lorenzo, who pursued it,³ must have known it. Defeated at Campomorto, Sixtus IV. wrote to the princes four days later (August 29) praying for peace, and to the Emperor Frederick III. to obtain his mediation.⁴ This pacific mood of a warlike Pope was met with incredulity and even discontent. When the Florentines learned that (December 12) peace had been concluded in his chamber,⁵ as they ignored Lorenzo's part in the affair,⁶ they dared to proclaim themselves dissatis-

misero non si appellare mai ad futurum concilium. Item che S. M. promise expresse a papa Sisto non si appellare mai" (Dep. of the Ambass. of Modena, Florence, September 12, 1482, in *Atti e memorie*, &c., i. 296).

¹ Baccio Ugolini to Lorenzo, Bâle, October 25, 1482, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 232-233. There are three of these letters, dated September 20, 30, and October 25. Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 227-233.

² November 13, 1484, after the death of Sixtus IV. See Infessura, vol. iii. part. ii. p. 1153; *Ann. Eccl.*, 1482, § 23, vol. xxx. p. 25.

³ Ant. Montecatino reports a conversation that he had with Lorenzo: "Mi doglio che a Roma non abbia V. M^{za} qualcuno che proponesse de li partiti. . . . Lorenzo incominciò a ridere e disse: Antonio, tu di il vero, ma lassa passare qualche giorno, forse che tu intenderai vi sarà qualcheduno a questo effetto; ancora spero io avrò frutto circa questa pace più che niuno. . . . E vidi non volea essere da me più tentato. Dionisio Pucci suo compagno e provveditore de li M^{ci} Signori X., il quale intende ogni cosa, questo di mi disse ragionando che avea più speranza ne le pratiche di Lorenzo che di niun altro con la pace" (December 4, 1482; *Atti e memorie*, &c., i. p. 264).

⁴ The letter from Sixtus IV. to the Emperor is found in *Ann. Eccl.*, 1482, § 9, vol. xxx. p. 20, and Rinaldi says at the end that the Pontiff addressed himself to the other Christian princes as well. Two other letters from him can be seen, dated the evening of the day following the peace due to the Venetians, December 11, the other to the cardinals, December 16, in Malipieri, *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., vol. iv. p. 269, 271. The first is also in P. Cirneo, xxi. 1209, and in *Ann. Eccl.*, 1482, § 19, vol. xxx. p. 23.

⁵ Jac. de Volt., xxiii. 181; Sanuto, xxii. 1225; Machiavelli, viii. 128 B.

⁶ Ant. Montecatino thanking Lorenzo the 13th of December, Lorenzo replied to him that "non accadeva ringraziare, ma che mi volea mostrare una lettera per la quale io vedria così essere stato il vero" (*Atti e memorie*, &c., i. p. 264).

fied.¹ The question of Romagna was in abeyance; the Romagnese lords remained in the Pope's power, or his son's. Thus they would not form the circle with which Florence hoped again to surround herself in the event of an attack from Lombardy. Lorenzo himself, when he learned the conditions of peace, shared the feeling of his countrymen. He only gave his consent upon the urgent request of Ercole d'Este,² and because he did not dare to count upon the King of France.³ "As for me," he said to the orators of Milan, "I should be satisfied with having saved Ferrara. The habits of the day deprive its people of any confidence in the future. They will not court ruin without the hope of some advantage."⁴ On the other hand, the Ten of War said they intended to hold themselves in reserve, and not to alienate the Most Christian King because of the numerous Florentine merchants settled in his states.⁵

In the end, matters turned out better than had been expected in Florence, for Venice did not approve of this treaty of peace, and recalled her ambassador from Rome,⁶ thus incurring excommunication.⁷ War was not ended, but the hostile league was broken, and everybody was now against the ambitious Venetians.

The winter was given up to preparations. On February 28, 1483, a diet met at Cremona, in which Lodovico il

¹ Capponi, ii. 149-150, who quotes the legation manuscript, herein indicated, of his ancestor, Pier Capponi.

² See letters of Ant. Montecatino to Ercole, December 17 and 20, 1482, and from Ercole to Lorenzo, January 5, 1483. *Atti e memorie*, i. p. 265, 266.

³ Buser, p. 230; Cipolla, p. 619, n. 2.

⁴ " Salvamo Ferrara, che bene farino. S. Mtia dixè: Quanto a mi bastaria, ma a questo populo li modo d'hora gli fanno mancare la fede in l'avenire et dubitare che quando bene Ferrara sia salvata, gli sia dicto come adesso che habino pacientia expectando il tempo, alegando avvi impedimenti, etc. Si che non deliberano difarsi, dove non sperano uno fructo al mondo" (Letters from the Milanese ambassadors, Antonio Trivulzio et Malatesta Sacramoro, December 23, 1482. *Arch. Sforz.*, copies, No. 1610, f. 321).

⁵ The same, December 24, *ibid.*, f. 324.

⁶ December 27. Documents shown in Romanin, iv. 411.

⁷ Capponi, ii. 150.

Moro, Ascanio Sforza, the Duke of Calabria, Ercole d'Este, the Marquis-Cardinal of Mantua, Giovanni Bentivoglio, and Lorenzo took part. The last had just returned from Rome, whither he had gone in the capacity of orator,¹ and counted upon a similar commission for Cremona. He held in the diet a higher place than his official position entitled him to,² where the superiority of his mind and his eloquence were admired. Perhaps they contributed to some extent to the decision that was taken that the armies should cross the Po and make way upon Venetian territory.³

On their side, the Venetians had crossed the Adda, in the hope of provoking a revolt in Milan, while by sea they seized Gallipoli in Apulia.⁴ On land the campaign was laughable. The armies encamped opposite each other, and only troubled the friendly populations whose territory they occupied with the evils of war. "One would have said that the Italian soldiers knew of no other means of entering a town than waiting for the enemy to vacate it."⁵ Everything contributed to inaction: the unhealthy climate, the continual change of chiefs,⁶ the bad feeling between the confederates, and their political calculations. Lodovico il Moro was fretted to impatience by the Duke of Calabria's command in Lombardy, where he protected his son-in-law, Gian Galeaz, against fell designs. Venice, who had suggested to Louis XI. the enterprise of Naples, to the

¹ February 1483, with Bernardo Rucellai. See instructions relative to this embassy, February 5, 1483, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 241.

² *Ammirato*, xxv. 155.

³ See on this diet Jacopo of Volterra, xxiii. 184; *Ann. Placent.*, xx. 970; Sanuto, *Comment.*, p. 65. Cipolla (p. 60) indicates other sources.

⁴ See Angelo Tafuro, *Guerra de' Sign. Viniziani contra la Cettate di Gallipoli*, R.I.S., xxiv. 913.

⁵ Sismondi, vii. 202. Cf. *Ammirato*, xxv. 156.

⁶ René of Lorraine arrived in Venice, April 1483, to replace San Severino, departed September 8, under pretext of Louis XI.'s death, which happened August 30. See Malipieri, *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., vii. 279, 285; Navagero, xxiii. 1182; Sanuto, xxii. 1226, and *Comment.*, p. 77; Cipolla, p. 620. In Desjardins (i. 200-204) may be read the text of the instructions given, November 8, 1483, to the ambassadors sent to Charles VIII. to condole with him on the death of his father, and congratulate him on his arrival to the throne.

Duke of Orleans that of Milan, and vainly striven to carry out these negotiations with the too busy Anne of Beaujeu,¹ ended by treating with Il Moro, whom she saw establishing himself upon Milanese ground.² The Duke of Ferrara's displeasure was great when Venice became mistress of the Isle of Rovigo and the mouths of the Adige and Po; the Pope also, without whose aid the peace he had desired to bring about was concluded,³ was incensed, as was his son Riario, who thought he was robbed of what he was not allowed to take, and who protested to the Pontifical Legate,⁴ though on the eve of Sixtus' death, already weakened,⁵ if not ruined, by the bad news;⁶ finally, Lorenzo was enraged because he could not obtain the return of Sarzana.

The disappointment of the last must have been great, for he had mixed himself up with the peace. Calabria, who did nothing without consulting him, had sent him from Bagnuolo, where peace was concluded, Giovanni Albino, diplomatist and Neapolitan historian, with Gioviano Pontano, his secretary and

¹ Letter of Lionetto des Rossi, May 14, 1484, translation in Buser, p. 242, Cipolla (p. 623, n. 1) points out other sources. We must add that the relations between Venice and the Pope were unfriendly; the Venetian orator left Rome "dia mala voglia per non aver potuto parlare a la santità del N. S. dicendo: questo non si saria fatto ad un Turco. Mostrava aver paura che 'l papa non gli publicasse addosso la crociata, e che S. S. lo facesse, non sperasse mai pace, e che prima si accorderiano col diavolo" (Ant. Montecatino to Ercole, February 28, 1483. *Atti e memorie*, &c., i. p. 265).

² Treaty of Bagnuolo, a few miles from Brescia, August 7, 1484. See text in Du Mont, vol. iii. part ii. p. 128 *sq.*

³ "S. B. volentieri vorrebbe ogni accordo. . . . Il papa ha gran desiderio di pace, e oggi a tutti noi oratori ha confessato quelle pratiche" (G. Vespucci to Lorenzo, Rome, October 23, 1483, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 250). Malipieri (*Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., vol. vii. p. 269) speaks of Sixtus' efforts for peace, and Venice's distrust of a Pope who did not hold himself bound by oath. We can see in Jacopo of Volterra (xxiii. 196, 198) how the Protonotary Colonna had been beheaded after having been promised liberty if he would give up to the Pope the fortress of Marino, which in fact was in his hands.

⁴ Navagero, xxiii. 1190.

⁵ Jacopo of Volterra, xxiii. 200; Infessura, vol. iii. part ii. p. 1182; Burselli, xxiii. 904; Sanuto, xxii. 1234; P. Cirneo, xxi. 1218; Machiavelli, viii. 129 B, 130 A; Ammirato, xxv. 155, 162. Nothing could be more severe than Infessura's judgment of Sixtus IV.

⁶ See in Jacopo of Volterra (xxiii. 199) how he received the news.

prime mover in the treaty.¹ But Lorenzo's interests were too involved in the termination of a war that robbed him of men and gold, and turned his attention from matters more personal and pressing, for him to be long put out by a miscalculation of detail.

If the Medici were not to appear inferior to the Albizzi, whose power they usurped, Lorenzo must have territorial acquisitions. Lucca was still uncaptured, but Sienna seemed a readier prey. When the Duke of Calabria had been recalled to the south to retake Otranto and expel the Turks, Lorenzo had replaced him as the officious protector of the Siennese Republic, which had fallen from the hands of the aristocracy into those of the people, or rather into those of the lower class, whom one of the haughty Ricasoli represented then as "mad, willing to turn to whomever would fill its stomach, and to start twenty-five revolutions a day for a bottle of wine."² His protection was purchased by the restitution of Florentine lands occupied during the war;³ from officious it might become official, and thus transform itself into a peaceful conquest. Everything depended on the price offered.

Gold was necessary also, and probably a larger sum, to recover Sarzana, taken by Agostino Fregoso, and retained by the jealousy of its neighbours. Not feeling strong enough to defend this place alone, Fregoso had given it up to the Bank

¹ In his work *De Prudentia*. See Carlo Rosselli del Turco, *Essai sur Pontano* in the *Rivista Universale*, fascic. 181, November 1877, and Cipolla, p. 625. A few months later, October 8, 1484, Calabria, returning to the kingdom of Naples, passed through Florence. See Al. Rinuccini, p. 140.

² Having given the details of the movement in Sienna to the Ten, Pietro de Giovanni Ricasoli adds: "Loro vogliono ad ogni giuoco essere li maestri. Ma niuno fondamento si può fare sopra le pazzie loro, che è proprio un brodetto di pazzi, e quella plebe si volgerà sempre con chi avrà meglio il modo ad empire loro il corpo, che non vi è niuno di queglii plebei che per un fiasco di vino non faccia il di 25 mutazioni" (Letter transcribed by Ant. Montecatino in his despatch of November 2, 1482; *Atti e memorie*, i. 262).

³ The chief of those places was Castellina. It was the subject of long negotiations, in which Sixtus IV. took part. For that matter, it was an old question. See Jacopo of Volterra, xxiii. 164, and in Fabroni (*Doc.*, p. 233) a letter of the Ten, dated February 17, 1483.

of San Giorgio, a powerful company which at the time directed the Genoese traffic,¹ and whose representative government, wealth, army, and system of administration were much superior to those of the State.² As well as Sarzana, it possessed Pietrasanta, a mortgage for a loan to Lucca, and it refused to yield it even for repayment of the loan.³ Its proximity was intolerable to the Florentines. From 1343 they had lost all right to this place, which they themselves had sold, and which in turn had belonged to Pisa and to Lucca;⁴ but always anxious to put "the bit into the mouth"⁵ of Lucca, and in consequence recover Sarzana, they were prevented because threatened by the garrison of Pietrasanta, which place was the key of Lunigiana. Happily they remembered in time that a Florentine *podestato* had built it in the thirteenth century. In default of the substance, they found the shadow of a right.

The occasion, besides, was favourable: anarchy reigned at Genoa,⁶ and the treaty of Bagnuolo left Florence free scope. As early as September 1484, the *condottieri* of the Republic were in Lunigiana.⁷ Chariots of munition and provisions destined for their troops were attacked and taken on the way by the garrison of Pietrasanta. They were so feebly protected that their passage under the walls of an enemy's town could only have been a provocation to justify ulterior revenge. Autumn reached its end, the season for sieges was past, above all, in a plain between the sea and the mountains, transformed into marshes by an insufficiency of slopes, and breathing malarial fevers. All the same, Lorenzo was not willing to wait for the spring; he was in a hurry to retort upon

¹ Upon this company, Trollope (iii. 425) refers to Serra, *Storia di Genova*, 5th speech at end of vol. iv. of the Capolago edition, 1835, and to the *Descrizione di Genova e del Genovesato*, published upon the occasion of the scientific congress held in this town in 1846, part iii. p. 148.

² Machiavelli, viii. 130 B; Sismondi, vii. 232.

³ Cambi, *Del.*, xxi. 25.

⁴ See our vol. iv. p. 352, n. 3.

⁵ Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir.*, c. vii. vol. iii. p. 70.

⁶ See Sismondi, vii. 236; Cipolla, p. 639.

⁷ Ammirato, xxv. 162.

the Genoese, who had just descended upon Vada and were firing upon the tower of Leghorn.¹

The start was not brilliant; the Florentines were always pitiable in war. They avoided fighting, and the batteries were hardly raised before Pietrasanta when the three captains fell ill, one of them carried off by a ball, and two civil commissaries by fever. But the adversaries were neither braver nor more intelligent. On November 5 an assault was made and a bastion taken, and nothing more was necessary to make them yield. On November 8, Lorenzo came and received their capitulation, the whole honour of which he took for himself.²

The honour was not great, and still less so the profit. Lucca, which during the siege had refused men to Florence to avoid a misunderstanding with Genoa, and provisions because of the famine, supplying them with only meagre forage, claimed Pietrasanta, which she had once possessed.³ Sienna, too, was getting ready for arms, and the near arrival of René was announced.⁴ Every one was weary of the war, which might spread from Tuscany all over Italy. Lodovico il Moro and Ferrante of Naples, seconded by Sixtus IV.'s successor, were in treaty for peace.⁵

The election of a new Pope, whoever he might be, could not but be favourable to Lorenzo. Death delivered him of a great enemy, whom the historian of the Holy See, Infesura, calls a monster, or rather of two, for Girolamo Riario, no longer near the pontifical throne, ceased to be formidable. But the Genoese Giambattista Cybo, Pope by name

¹ Folieta, l. xi. ; Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir.*, c. vii. vol. iii. p. 70; Sismondi, vii. 237; Capponi, ii. 152; Cipolla, p. 629.

² Cambi, *Del.*, xxi. 25; Bizarro, l. xv. p. 358; Valori, *Vita Laur.*, p. 44; Machiavelli, viii. 131; Ammirato, xxv. 164.

³ Gir. Tommasi, *Sommario della Storia di Lucca*, in *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., vol. x. p. 339, and indication of documents, p. 347, note 21; Machiavelli, viii. 131 B.

⁴ Aldovrandino Guidoni to Ercole d'Este, Florence, 1485, during the first months; *Atti e memorie*, i. 269.

⁵ See Capponi, ii. 152, who cites the letters addressed to the Ten by Pier Capponi, commissary of war at Pisa.

of Innocent VIII.,¹ might have been more useful. If he did no harm, he countenanced it in others. His indolence was scarcely less fatal than the turbulence of his predecessor. His reign was one of favourites, of nephews and sons; and putting aside all shame and renouncing the cloak of nepotism, he publicly recognised seven illegitimate children that he had had by different women.²

In politics his cynicism was as great. Brought up at the court of Alphonsus of Naples, he received his first bishopric from Ferrante—the bishopric of Amalfi.³ But he was determined to be independent, and he did not lack pretexts to break loose. The Neapolitans were irritated, the barons impatient of an odious yoke, and Alphonsus's followers leaned toward the house of Anjou. We must read the contemporaries on the house of Aragon. A Venetian chronicler, Girolamo Priuli, called Ferrante the "god of flesh," and added that it would require more than one "large book" to record "the tyranny, cruelty, luxury, the dishonourable tastes, the betrayals, thefts, and murders of the king, and especially of the Duke, the father of treason and preserver of ribaldry, beside whom Nero was a saint."⁴ "No man," writes the cold Comines, "was more cruel than the Duke of Calabria, more wicked, vicious, tainted, or greedy." The father was still more dangerous, "Car nul ne se congnoissoit en lui ne en son courroux, car en faisant bonne chère il prenoit et trahissoit les gens. . . . Jamais en lui n'y avoit grâce ne miséricorde . . . et jamais n'avoit eu aucune pitié ne compassion de son povre peuple. Quant aux deniers, il faisoit toute la marchandise du royaume . . . et vendoient le plus cher qu'ils pouvoient. Et si ladite

¹ August 29, 1484. On his election, his letters can be read, written from Rome to Lorenzo. They are in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 256-263.

² Infessura, vol. iii. part ii. p. 1190; Sismondi, vii. 217; Gregorovius, *Geschichte der Stadt Rom.*, vol. vii.; Reumont, *Geschichte der Stadt Rom.*, vol. iii. part i. and ii.

³ *Ann. Eccl.*, 1484, § 28, 40-46, vol. xxx. p. 68, 72-74.

⁴ Priuli, *De Bello Gallico*, R.I.S., xxiv. 16. Muratori has by mistake published this chronicle under the name of Sanuto. See Cipolla, p. 630.

marchandise s'abaissoit de prix, contraignoient le peuple de la prendre, et par le temps qu'ils vouloient vendre, nul ne pouvoit vendre qu'eux."¹

This commercial monopoly and scandalous traffic, winked at by Sixtus IV., was not permitted by Innocent VIII. Moreover, influenced by Cardinal de la Rovere, all-powerful with him, he haughtily claimed the pecuniary tribute that Ferrante had been allowed to replace by the gift of a pony.² He claimed the sovereignty of the kingdom, and invited the feudal barons, who, as in France under Louis XI., defended the spirit of the Middle Ages against the modern spirit, to bring to him their complaints against the king.³ The rebel inhabitants of Aquila having implored his assistance, he decided for war, and obtained as commander from Venice Roberto of San Severino.⁴

Lorenzo was extremely put out by this fresh and unexpected recourse to arms. His treaty with Naples obliged him, as well as the Duke of Milan, if required, to furnish the kingdom with aid. Now this aid was the great hope.⁵ The demand was formally made by the ambassadors towards the end of August.⁶ Lorenzo did not deny his obligations.⁷ His ancient tutor, Gentile Becchi, Bishop of Arezzo, one of the most fluent orators of the day, addressed Innocent VIII., in the name of the deputies of the league, in a splendid declamatory harangue on behalf of Ferrante.⁸ But if a few preparations⁹ were made, which the wily Lodovico¹⁰

¹ Comines, l. vii. c. xiii. vol. ii. p. 375-377. Camillo Porzio is later (the first edition of his *Congiura de' Baroni* is of 1565, Rome), and he tries to be indulgent; he cannot, however, hide the odious side of these two characters.

² *Ann. Eccl.*, 1485, § 40, vol. xxx. p. 103.

³ See Sismondi, vii. 219; Cipolla, p. 631.

⁴ See Capponi, ii. 153.

⁵ M. Cipolla (p. 631-632) cites a fragment of a letter from M. Rosselli del Turco: "Et confortamo la magnificenza vostra ad sperare che le cose de qua omne di piglieranno migliore aspetto."

⁶ Ammirato, xxv. 169.

⁷ The petty details may be seen in the despatches of Ald. Guidoni to Ercole from November 27, 1485; *Atti e memorie*, i. 273 sq.

⁸ The text is in Desjardins, i. 205-214.

⁹ Ammirato, xxv. 171.

¹⁰ The letter of Lodovico is of October 10, 1485, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 269-271. It was written upon the occasion of the departure of San Severino from the

pressed, although he took no part in them, Lorenzo was wanting in zeal. To the objurgations and flatteries of Ferrante, who called him his first friend in Italy,¹ he replied by advice and reproaches, expressing regret that the king had no longer the reputation of being rich in men and money, as in the days when he was regarded as the judge of the peninsula.² It was much worse when he saw the Duke of Calabria betrayed by the Orsini, after having for all success taken forty mules and occupied one of the Tiber bridges;³ when he heard the Count of Pitigliano, captain of the Florentines, accuse the Ten of War of having flung him into the arms of these traitors⁴ in order to have a pretext for running away and retreating to Milan.⁵ Feigning illness, he refused his ally an interview; he refused Calabria permission to come to Florence.⁶ He went so far as to pronounce these incredible words: "I will have nothing more to do with affairs, for I do not succeed. I will give myself up to pleasure and amusement."⁷

Venetian States to bring assistance to the Pope and the barons. See also letter of A. Guidoni to Ercole, October 22, *Atti e memorie*, i. 273. It contains exhortations analogous to those of Milan.

¹ Letters of Ferrante, reported by the historian Giov. Albino (*De Bello Intestino*), his orator at Florence and at Milan. Cf. Fabroni, p. 130, and letter of Francesco Gaddi to Lorenzo, October 23, 1485, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 271-274.

² "Dogliomi che lo Sign. Re non habbia quella reputatione avea altro tempo de' denari et de gente d'arme, che S. M. era stimato lo giudice d'Italia" (Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 268). Sismondi did not then suspect the real motive of delay when he saw in it the ordinary slowness of the Florentines in getting ready to act (vol. vii. p. 226). "Having an eye to everything," writes Lorenzo, and in certain things feigning not to understand, "I am grieved from the bottom of my heart that the Lord Duke has this reputation for cruelty that is so unjust to him. Let his Excellency study every means to rid himself of it. For instance, if the people will not willingly support the taxes, let him suppress them, and return to the ordinary ones, for it is better to receive one carlin with free will and love than ten with hatred and anger. The people dislike innovations" (Letter of November 3, 1485, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 269; Capponi, i. 154, n. 1, has reproduced a part of the text).

³ Ald. Guidoni to Ercole, December 5, 1485; *Atti e memorie*, i. 276.

⁴ *Ibid.*, January 18, 1486; *ibid.*, p. 278.

⁵ *Ibid.*, January 17, 1486; *ibid.*, p. 278.

⁶ *Ibid.*, and letter of January 25th, p. 279.

⁷ "Io non mi voglio più intromettere in faccende alcune, perchè le mie vanno a la rovescia, e voglio attendere a darmi piacere e buon tempo" (words quoted by

In consequence of this shameless declaration, when Trivulzio passed through Florence on his way to join Calabria, he visited him in the "Angel" inn, and spoke to him in pacific terms.¹ If he had not dared to prevent Pier Capponi, who belonged to the camp of the Florentine recruits, from marching upon Rome² without other results than an indecisive meeting (May 7),³ he was always, like the rest of the world, looking towards the Alps. Like the rebel barons, who awaited their Messiah in René of Lorraine, and like Ferrante, who looked for allies in Burgundy,⁴ he expected every moment to see a French army marching upon Milan and Naples, and, like his compatriots, he had too many commercial interests in France to turn his back upon the Most Christian King.

Lodovico il Moro was no less weary of hostilities continued upon the Neapolitan frontiers, where he had nothing to pretend to, and where, on both sides, competent chiefs were lacking,⁵ nor less apprehensive of a Swiss and French invasion, whose ever-suspended menace obliged him to hold his forces in reserve.⁶ For this reason, while Lorenzo was negotiating an agreement with Genoa,⁷ he proposed to mediate between the belligerents.⁸ The Pope received his overtures favour-

Ald. Guidoni, January 19, 1486; *ibid.*, p. 279). We must take note of the date. In comparing it with the preceding ones, we see that it is at the moment of disgrace that this worthless ally went off.

¹ Ald. Guidoni to Ercole, February 9, 1486; *Atti e memorie*, i. 279.

² Vincenzo Acciajuoli, *Vito di Piero di Gino Capponi*, in *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., vol. iv. part ii. p. 22, 23.

³ See the sources in Cipolla, p. 635.

⁴ C. Porzio, *La Congiura de' Baroni*, p. 69, 70.

⁵ "Il peggio che vi sia è che nè il papa, nè Milano, nè Fiorenza non si trovano pur un capo, s'egli bisognasse, da poter operare ne l'armi," &c. (Ald. Guidoni, December 28, 1487; *Atti e memorie*, i. 298). This was making very little of Trivulzio.

⁶ A letter of Baccio Ugolino to Lorenzo, July 30, 1484 (in Buser, p. 511), shows that at the French court Ferrante's ambassador had learnt that the Duke of Orleans meditated an expedition against Milan.

⁷ These negotiations with Genoa at least dated from the latter days of 1485 (Ald. Guidoni to Ercole, January 2, 1486; *Atti e memorie*, i. 277). From May 8 following hope in this peace "vanished in smoke" (*ibid.*, p. 282).

⁸ Letter of Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, Lodovico's brother, to the Duke of Calabria, Rome, March 6, 1486, at the end of Pier Capponi's *Life*, by V. Acciajuoli, in *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., vol. iv. part ii. p. 66.

ably. He had counted on Venice, and he was left to fight alone, exhausting his last resources, betrayed by his captain, whose real or forged letters Lorenzo had cleverly conveyed to him.¹ His wishes were opposed by Roberto of San Severino, who, retaining his mask, "demanded things that grocers do not own;"² above all, by Cardinal La Balue, who, as a Frenchman, maintained that after having drawn the king of France into the affair, His Holiness could not abandon him. But the Sacred College, half of the opinion of Innocent VIII., engaged in violent altercations with Louis XI.'s ancient victim. "Do not listen to a drunkard," said the Cardinal Vice-Chancellor, Roderigo Borgia. In return, the drunkard rightly reproached his colleague, "the Spanish miscreant," with his birth, his morals, and his want of faith, so that both nearly fell to blows!³ On March 6, 1486, in the consistory, Ascanio Sforza, another cardinal, and brother of Il Moro, sought to unmask France, whose aim was not to make Ferrante yield to his feudal lord, the Pope, but to substitute another prince in his stead, according to the wishes of the Cardinal of Angiers. Whence a fresh altercation, which, interrupted by Innocent, was continued outside the consistory. "My brother's state," said Ascanio, "does not rest upon the shoulders of frogs. The French may come; they will find somebody to tackle. But everybody knows that they will never come. We know how they came to the aid of the magnificent Lorenzo in the recent Tuscan war."⁴

To speak in this imprudent way was to play with fire. By defying the French, they risked an overdraught upon their

¹ Ald. Guidoni to Ercole, March 22, 1486; *Atti e memorie*, i. 280; Bruto, l. viii., in *Burm.*, vol. viii. part i. p. 208; *Ann. Eccl.*, 1486, § 16, vol. xxx. p. 19. Only Bruto affirms that San Severino's letters were forged; but this presupposes that the annalist of the Church accepted as true the assertion of the Medici's enemy.

² Ald. Guidoni to Ercole, June 12, 1486; *Atti e memorie*, i. 283.

³ *Infessura*, vol. iii. part ii. p. 1204.

⁴ See two letters of Ascanio Sforza to his brother, March 6, 1486, at the end of Pier Capponi's *Life* in *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., vol. iv. part ii. p. 67-71. The passage quoted is in the second of these letters, p. 70-71.

expectations. Italy, who by so many of her sons for so many years had had a commercial advantage of France, could not but be aware that the States General had complained in 1484 of the large tribute that France paid annually to Italian industries, and that the court of the Most Christian King regarded as his the kingdom of Naples, the duchy of Milan, and Liguria.¹ The question of Naples Louis XI. wanted to suppress by marrying his heir to Beatrice, Ferrante's daughter, upon condition that Ferrante would help him in his war with John II. of Aragon. But rather than turn upon a relation, Ferrante preferred to give his daughter to Mathias Corvinus.² This refusal had embittered the court of France and ripened the projected expedition to Italy.

This was how the French ambassadors in May 1486 came to Florence to fan the flame of war against Naples.³ Their chief, the Sire of Faucon, had an interview at Lyons with Cosimo Sassetti, Lorenzo's banker, and endeavoured to win him over to the ideas it was his mission to spread along the banks of the Arno.⁴ But these ideas were still vague, and above all, of distant promise, since Charles VIII. was a minor. Meanwhile it was necessary to accept the peace that Innocent VIII. as well as his subjects, who had been under siege for three months,⁵ Lodovico il Moro, Isabella of Castile, and Ferdinand of Aragon all desired. Ferdinand dreaded the French in Naples on account of his Sicily and the encouragement of the Turks to bear down upon the coasts of Catania or Palermo, on account of the Moors of Granada.⁶

Thus peace, desired by all parties, was concluded on August

¹ See what M. Agenore Gelli says on this subject, *Arch. Stor.*, 3rd ser., vol. xv. p. 294, ann. 1872.

² Louis XI.'s letter to Lorenzo containing this proposition is dated June 19, 1473; Ferrante's reply, also addressed to Lorenzo, is of August 9 following. They were published by Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 66-70, then by Desjardins, i. 161, 163.

³ Ald. Guidoni to Ercole, May 15, 1486; *Atti e memorie*, i. 282. Cf. Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir.*, c. viii. vol. iii. p. 74, 75.

⁴ See Cos. Sassetti's letter to Lorenzo, Lyon, April 6, 1486, in Buser, p. 513.

⁵ C. Porzio, *La Congiura de' Baroni*, f. 71 v^o.

⁶ See Sismondi, vii. 227.

II.¹ Ferrante, glad to have got out of the wasp's nest at the price of his self-respect,² thanked Lorenzo with meridional demonstrativeness. "God knows how much our heart and our wishes are anxious to do everything in the world to show our gratitude for your continual friendly services. All that we can do for you and for your house will not reach the thousandth part of that which we ardently desire to do."³

In spite of this theatrical payment, in spite of the display of official rejoicings and the bells pealing a *gloria*, Lorenzo was not more satisfied than Il Moro⁴ with a peace that gave Florence neither Sarzana nor Sienna. He expressed himself in "strange" words, and an immediate expedition against Sarzana⁵ was predicted; for he usually played the sphinx, and, when he was afraid of betraying himself, refused to see anybody, alleging his horrible sufferings from the gout. In office, where his word was law, he behaved with the same mysterious reserve.⁶ The foreign ambassadors knew little, and the Florentines nothing at all.⁷ Whence general distrust,

¹ Trivulzio to the Duke of Milan, August 6 and 12, 1486, in Rosmini, *Vita di Trivulzio*, ii. 149, 150; Ald. Guidoni to Ercole, August 13; *Atti e memorie*, i. 285.

² Ald. Guidoni to Ercole, Flor., August 16; *Atti e memorie*, i. 285; Porzio, *La Congiura de' Baroni*, f. 63 r°; Allegretti, xxiii. 829; Infessura, vol. iii. part ii. p. 1211; *Ann. Eccl.*, 1486, § 13, 14, vol. xxx. p. 119.

³ Ferrante to Lorenzo, August 23; text in Desjardins, i. 214.

⁴ On Milan, see Ald. Guidoni to Ercole, September 11; *Atti e memorie*, i. 286.

⁵ Ald. Guidoni to Ercole, August 16; *Atti e memorie*, i. 285. This pretension to Sarzana and Sienna is formally attested by Guidoni.

⁶ "Che le condizioni non ce le dicevano al presente, per qualche buono rispetto; questi signori X. sono uomini che risguardano molto sottilmente il tutto" (Ald. Guidoni to Ercole, January 2, 1486; *Atti e memorie*, i. 277). "Li fatti e le pratiche di questi sign. Fior. il più de le volte si bisognano conietturare e indovinare, perchè con li oratori, . . . non dicono mai o ben rare volte cosa alcuna, se non quando la si sa universalmente per ognuno" (*ibid.*, January 3, 1486, p. 278). "Questi M^{ca} signori X. a me non vogliono dire cosa alcuna" (*ibid.*, March 4, 1486, p. 280). "Poichè V. M^{ca} non mi vuol dire a me quello che le domando" (*ibid.*, April 3, 1488, p. 299). "È un uomo che non si allarga a parlare nè a dire niuna sua pratica, se prima non la ha in termine che sia per assettata, . . . e non dire mai quattro se non l'ha nel sacco" (Manfredo Manfredi to Ercole, April 25, 1489; *ibid.*, i. 307).

⁷ This is seen by the sterility of contemporaries, Lionardo Morelli, Tribaldo des Rossi, and also Giovanni Cambi. Even Ammirato, who searched the archives, knows very little more.

especially in the free towns. His alliance was felt to be uncertain, and was known to depend upon his personal interests; it was contrasted with that of the Signories of two months, who gave more proof of connected ideas and good faith in speech and action. He ended by deceiving nobody. Of the court of Rome he said that it had ruined Italy, that the whole world was imperilled by its incapacity and ignorance in the art of leading men; ¹ of the Pope, that he had no brains, and governed every day more stupidly, or rather was badly governed himself, ² and that every possible evil might be expected of him. ³ But in reality he strained every effort to be on good terms with this same Pope of whom he spoke so badly; ⁴ and of that the king of France was so well aware, that he employed him as a go-between in his relations with the Holy See, ⁵ and Innocent VIII. himself paid so little heed to the remarks carried by rumour, that he got Trivulzio to say in Florence that he slept with Lorenzo's eyes, and that Lorenzo was occupied in giving him good guidance, lest both of them should be lost. ⁶ So his duplicity no longer

¹ "Questo stato ecclesiastico è sempre stato la ruina d'Italia, perchè sono ignoranti e non sanno modo di governare stati; però pericolano tutto il mondo" (Lorenzo's words to Ald. Guidoni, reported by him November 20, 1486; *Atti e mem.*, i. 291). Lorenzo must not be reproached with this judgment. Trivulzio said much worse: "Dice de la viltà, miseria e tristizia del papa quello che si può dire de uno gaglioffo, e conclude che se non si tien vivo e non se gli faccia animo, che è perso più tristamente che uomo vile mai se perdesse. . . . Egli è coniglio" (Trivulzio's words, reported by Guidoni, September 6, 1487, p. 296).

² "Sta malissimo contento de li modi del papa e pargli si governi ogni dì ed ora più scempiamente. . . . Si vede che 'l papa, senza gente d'armi e con poco cervello, è mal governato" (Ald. Guidoni à Ercole, December 28, 1487, *ibid.*, p. 298).

³ "Io ne credo ogni male di questo papa" (Lorenzo's words, reported by Guidoni, November 20, 1486, p. 291).

⁴ "Il Mco Lorenzo attende con ogni ingegno a domesticarsi con il pontefice" (Ald. Guidoni, September 9, 1486; *Atti e mem.*, i. 286).

⁵ See his letters copied by M. Agenore Gelli in the *Carteggio Mediceo*, and published at the end of a speech delivered by him, April 6, 1873, in the Dante Lyceum of Florence under this title: *Lorenzo de' Medici*, p. 23, n. 17.

⁶ "Che esso pontefice dormia con gli occhi di esso Lorenzo, e che volesse pensare a governarlo bene. . . . Che se lo governava male, seguiria la ruina de l'uno e de l'altro" (*ibid.*, September 6, 1487, p. 296).

duped, but met indulgent censure because it was so widespread; especially when it was compared with that of King Ferrante, who, upon absurd pretexts, put to death those very barons he had sworn by a solemn treaty to spare.¹

Even when he thought the hour had come to attack Sarzana, Lorenzo still endeavoured to deceive the Italian powers. "The intention of our town," he said to the ambassador of Ferrara, "is to undertake nothing against Sarzana for some years, but to temporise until we find our affairs in better condition; for well do we know that Lord Lodovico has concluded a treaty with the Genoese. This lord exposes his ignorance of the way in which Florence governs herself. When we are committed to expense, we face it royally; but when we are inclined for rest, it takes a good deal to rouse us to dance. Now that the Signory has laid down arms, it will need very grave circumstances to force it to take them up again."²

No language could be more precise, and nevertheless those interested were not quieted. Genoa proposed to Venice a secret alliance against Florence.³ Much displeased,⁴ Lorenzo hoped still that the league between Genoa and Milan would bring about dissension, and turn attention from Sarzana.⁵ This illusion did not last long. In the beginning of 1487, without even waiting for the spring, the Genoese crossed the Magra, invaded, took, and burnt the village of Sarzanello, and with their artillery attacked the *rocca* where the Florentines on guard had taken refuge.

It was necessary to repulse this audacious attack without delay. The Count of Pitigliano, captain-general, started for the camp. An appeal was made to the *condottieri*, to the

¹ See details in Ald. Guidoni to Ercole, July 11, 1487; *Atti e mem.*, i. 295; Infessura, vol. iii. part ii. p. 1214; Porzio, f. 67; Burselli, xxiii. 906; Comines, l. vii. c. ii. vol. ii. p. 301; Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir.*, c. viii. vol. iii. p. 76; Machiavelli, viii. 132 A; Ammirato, xxv. 176, 177.

² Ald. Guidoni to Ercole, November 4, 1486; *Atti e mem.*, i. 290.

³ Ercole to Guidoni, Ferrara, November 18, 1486; *Atti e mem.*, i. 291.

⁴ Ald. Guidoni to Ercole, November 20, 1481, *ibid.*, p. 291.

⁵ *Ibid.*, January 10, 1487, p. 292.

constables, and to the allies of the Republic. Many responded: the Orsini in the pay of Florence or Milan, the lords of Piombino, of Faenza, and of Mirandola. Six Neapolitan galleys arrived at Leghorn for a raid upon Corsica. Lodovico il Moro sent four hundred lancers. Lorenzo had hoped for more from the latter, but how could Sforza have wished to see the Florentines masters of Sarzana, and in consequence nearer to Genoa, upon which he had pretensions?¹ Besides, he was aware that Lorenzo complained bitterly of him;² men are not conciliated by recriminations any more than flies are caught by vinegar.

The Florentines were victorious before Sarzana, an unusual fact in their annals. They took the Genoese captain, Gian Luigi del Fiesco, prisoner, April 13, 1487. Pitigliano undertook the siege at once, but it was a long affair. Not until June 9 was the work advanced. Lorenzo, according to his habit, then came to spend a few days in the camp and gather his soldiers' laurels. He was in too great a hurry; everything was not yet finished. He saw three redoubts raised between the Magra and the place, and five bombards directed against the latter,

¹ "Non li pareva [to the Doria and the Card. of Geneva] che si potesse mettere fede in questa ultima di dare Gienova alla celsitudine vostra" (Stefano Taberna to the Duke of Milan, June 2, 1487, from Ospedaletto, near Volterra, where Lorenzo was staying for his gout. *Arch. Sforz.*, copies, No. 1610, f. 328 r^o, 329 v^o. The passage quoted is in f. 328 v^o). Many of Taberna's letters show that if, after the taking of Sarzana, he received the order to congratulate Lorenzo, Lorenzo did not believe in his sincerity. Taberna protested that his master had not "uno minimo pensiero ad interrompere il desiderio loro in la impresa di Serzana." The Signory believed him; Lorenzo did not: "Il Mc^o Laurentio, ben chè mi habii quasi risposto in medesima sententia, nondimeno ha dimostrato non havere l'animo ben libero di questa cosa" (July 7, 1487; *ibid.*, f. 344).

² "Io stava tutto allegro e contento de la pace fatta, parendomi che le cose avessero a stare tranquille e quiete; ma poiche vedo tante cose sorgere, io son disperato e vienmi voglia di andarmene a casa del diavolo, per non udir nominar Fiorenza, poichè non posso stare in pace nè senza affanno uno giorno. Mai non sento da Milano se non minaccie, mò di una cosa, mò di un'altra. . . . Abbiamo sopportate tante cose fuori di ogni dovere da lo stato di Milano. . . . E se vi volessi contare di molte altre ingiurie a noi fatte per Milano, quali avemo tollerate, ve ne potrei dire un migliaro. E noi non potiamo essere sopportati di cosa veruna; questo ci dimostra malo animo e stomaco verso di noi" (Lorenzo's words to Guidoni, reported by latter, October 12, 1486; *Atti e mem.*, i. 288).

which thundered night and day, but at decent intervals, and the largest of which carried 750 pounds of stones. Discord reigned in the besieged town; for two days there was nothing to eat but biscuits; wine was lacking, and water nearly so. No one dared to go out; prudence was compelled by an archer shot, and two youths only allowed to return by leaving their noses in the enemy's hands.¹ On June 16 the blockade was complete; the mining continued; they fired fifty times a day with six bombards.² However, this sufficed, and on the 22nd the garrison capitulated.³ On the next day Lorenzo returned to Florence, where he was received in triumph.⁴ Such was his easily-won glory at this hour, that it was said—doubtless by his enemies—that he thought of getting all Italy into his hands.⁵

His enemies were principally the Genoese and the Milanese. Il Moro looked askance at the weakening of Genoa, his future conquest,⁶ and his orator, Taberna, could not without difficulty clear him of a discontent which betrayed him too soon,⁷ and which disturbed the Florentines in their project of crossing the Magra, suggested by the *richiesti* in full council. "It would be the best means of giving back Genoa to the Duke of Milan," said Pier Filippo Pandolfini, one of the oracles of the day. Taberna laughed bitterly at these hypocritical proposals. "If you pass the Magra," he replied, "the Genoese could easily

¹ Stef. Taberna to the Duke of Milan, June 9, 1487; *Arch. Sforz.*, copies, No. 1610, f. 330.

² Stef. Taberna, June 16; *ibid.*, f. 338 ro, 339 ro.

³ Letter of the commissaries, Jacopo Guicciardini and Piero Vettori, Sarzana, June 22, 1487. Copy sent by Ald. Guidoni to Duke Ercole, *Atti e mem.*, i. 294. Sismondi (vii. 239) is wrong in saying May 22, and Ammirato, whom he quotes (xxv. 179), does not prove him right.

⁴ "Il M^{co} Lorenzo venne la vigilia di San Giovanni qua, fu visto e accarezzato più che fosse mai da questo popolo, che gli pare avere questa vittoria di Sarzana più da lui che da altri" (Ald. Guidoni to Ercole, Flor., June 26; *Atti e mem.*, i. 294).

⁵ Ald. Guidoni informed his master of this proposal (July 7, *ibid.*, p. 295).

⁶ "Mi pare che l'avuta di Genova per Milano farà stare questi signori sospesi e li darà che pensare" (Ald. Guidoni to Ercole, July 11; *Atti e mem.*, i. 295).

⁷ Stef. Taberna to the Duke of Milan, June 26; *Arch. Sforz.*, copies, No. 1610, f. 338-340.

throw themselves into the arms of France.”¹ Caught between the anvil and the hammer, Lorenzo broke out in bad humour, was rude to the ambassadors of the Italian powers, refused to explain himself, feigned despair, wished to find himself some place where for six months he would never hear breathed a word upon Italian matters, and openly desired to see the king of France master of all the peninsula.² “Lord Messer Lodovico is doing his best to force the Pope and the Florentines to the feet of his majesty the king. Very well, they will kneel, and since Lord Lodovico wishes to imperil Italian affairs, I will help him.”³

The orator of Ferrara, to whom were addressed these “mortal and despairing” words, as he called them, only replied by the advice that Lorenzo, if he were as wise as his ancestors, would come to an understanding with Milan;⁴ but he must have recognised his failure. Already, a year earlier, he spoke of a “wicked and vicious” upstart hireling, who only feigned anger in order to conceal his intimacy with the king of France, which so disquieted and vexed the Moor.⁵ For a moment this diplomatist may have imagined that the perfidy of Ferrante towards his barons would be the theriac that would bring about peace between Lodovico and Lorenzo; “but I do not know what to say,” he added; “they are both so diseased, that as soon as one member is cured, the evil flies to another.”⁶ The evil increased, for in the following October Lorenzo refused to see Stefano Taberna, the ambassador of

¹ See Taberna’s two letters, June 28; *Arch. Sforz.*, copies, No. 1610, f. 341–343.

² Ald. Guidoni to Ercole, July 7; *Atti e mem.*, i. 294. The spiteful phrase upon the eventual invasion of the French should be quoted textually: “Spera vedere esso re di Francia signore di tutta Italia” (p. 295).

³ “Che il sign. M. Lodovico faceva ciò che potea per fare ch’ el papa e Fiorentini si buttassero ne’ piedi a la M. R. e che si faria, e che poscia ch’ el sign. Lodovico volea le cose d’Italia pericolassero, che S. M^{za} etiam aiuteria a pericolarle” (Ald. Guidoni to Ercole, July 18; *ibid.*, p. 295).

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Guidoni calls Lorenzo “cattivo di nido . . . cattivo e vizioso.” See this letter, August 12, 1846; *Atti e mem.*, i. 285.

⁶ Ald. Guidoni to Ercole, July 21; *ibid.*, p. 295.

Milan, and his friends vehemently complained that Lorenzo was not treated courteously, and that every one sought to place all responsibility on his shoulders. To appease him, Taberna wrote, "We must show a great attachment to the king of Naples, to whom he desires to render an immortal service."¹

The diplomatist believed this; he was deceived, like everybody else. Upon this board Lorenzo did not play a more honest game than upon any other. His despatches, for a long time unknown, prove that he warned the Pope in this very month of October to be on his guard against a secret treaty proposed by Ferrante and against a private alliance with Naples, and to stick to the league, which alone was capable of securing the peace and equilibrium of Italy.² "I have said more than you asked me to say," he wrote to his orator in Rome; "I have yielded to my good nature, to my obligations, and my affection for our Lord. I quite understand that this is perilous. I would wish His Holiness to make the king understand that my actions have always been in His Majesty's interests. . . . I have written this letter so that you can read it entire to the Pope, and I think that you should do so."

But all the united deceit of a little Tartufe and the craft of a Machiavelli *manqué* did not save Lorenzo from the disappointment of seeing Genoa fall into the hands of the Milanese. In August 1488, Agostino Adorno was vested

¹ This important letter is unedited, and it may be well to transcribe a part of it. Taberna writes that he wanted to go to Pisa to rejoin Lorenzo: "Mi venne ad trovare ser Nicolò Michelozzi, il quale dolendosi vehementemente cum dire che al M^{co} Laurentio erano usati modi poco convenienti et che si cercava di darli tutti li carichi, non uscendo però ad alcuna particolarità, mi disse chel parere di quelli quali havea lassato qui il prefato M. Laurentio era ché io fossi contento di non voler andare alla sua M^{cia} per non li adiungere caricha et che volessi aspettarlo qui, et volendo io pur intendere di dove nascevano queste doglienze, et perseverando in proposito di volere cavalchare, mi disse che per alhora non mi poseva dire più ultra, ma che poy mi farebbe intendere il tutto, et circha lo andare mio mi parlò in forma che mi parse bene soprasedere. . . . Liberare la maestà sua di grande affanno et farli uno benefitio immortale" (October 7, 1487; *Arch. Sforz.*, copies, No. 1610, f. 356-358).

² Lorenzo to his orator in Rome, October 22, 1487; text in Desjardins, i. 214-219.

³ Lorenzo to his orator in Rome, *ibid.*, 217-219.

with the government for ten years in the name of Gian Galeaz. This result, although foreseen the previous year,¹ was very vexing for the Florentines. While independent, the old Republic was not very formidable, but it became so the moment it was only the harbour of the great state of Milan.²

It was this grave miscalculation, so soon following a victory which he had hoped to render fruitful, that drew Lorenzo to Innocent VIII. Innocent's interest manifestly lay in this understanding: between his two neighbours of the north and south, he was bound to choose the north, which was the weakest, and which had only accidentally become his opponent. Florence's interest is less apparent: it was not necessary for her, as it was for the Pope, to strengthen herself against a fresh Neapolitan war, and nothing seemed less probable, less to be feared, than a collision between Naples and Milan.³ Lorenzo's interest in the Pope's friendship was quite a personal one; ⁴ he was eager to be more and more intimate with the great families of princes. Certain it is that the princes paid him every honour. At the marriage of Ysabel of Aragon and Gian Galeaz, his son Piero was received more warmly than any of his colleagues, the other Florentine ambassadors; ⁵ but the courts shrank from contracting matrimonial alliances with a dynasty of merchants. To join the Pope, who was only a second-hand prince, was a middle term, an ingenious shift, with the private advantage of securing a part of the moral authority of the Holy See, the last power which remained to St. Peter's successor.

¹ See *supra*, p. 382, n. 6.

² Sismondi, vii. 244; Cipolla, p. 646, who points out the sources.

³ G. Capponi, however, says (ii. 157) that the alliance of Innocent VIII. and Lorenzo, who held between them the centre of Italy, was very important in preventing the powers of the peninsula from fighting; but they only separated Naples from Milan. Between these two states a continual struggle was hardly to be foreseen, and Venice in such a case was always free to infest the Neapolitan shores by sea.

⁴ The *Lettere di Lorenzo il Magnifico al S. P. Innocenzo VIII.*, may be seen. Published by Moreni, Florence, 1830.

⁵ G. Cambi, *Del.*, xxi. 39.

In this kind of negotiations Lorenzo made a start toward the end of 1486 through the medium of the Cardinal of San Marco.¹ Amongst the number of Innocent's recognised illegitimate children was one Franceschetto Cybo, a young man of no talent whatever, and not much thought of, who, even under his father's pontificate, made no figure, and who, from a matrimonial point of view, would find it hard to dispose of himself.² Lorenzo settled the matter. In March 1487 Giovanni Lanfredini, Florentine orator in Rome, arranged a marriage between Franceschetto Cybo and Maddalena, Lorenzo's third daughter, the apple of her mother, Clarissa's, eye.³ At the same time a match was made between Piero de' Lorenzo and Alfonsina, the late Cavalier Orsini's daughter, whose dowry was thirty thousand ducats.⁴

In the following month of June another no less delicate negotiation was opened: it was proposed that a cardinal's hat should be granted to the youngest son of Lorenzo, still quite a child. Like the princes and nobles, Lorenzo was bent on having one of his children in the Church, and his secret ambition destined the honour for the cleverest of his three sons. At the age of seven Giovanni de' Medicis received the tonsure. At eight he possessed four abbeys, notably in Italy that of Monte Cassino, an important one, and in France that of Fontdoulce, in the diocese of Saintes.⁵ Louis XI. would have

¹ Pandolfini, orator in Rome, to Lorenzo, December 13, 1486; letter indicated by Buser, p. 256.

² Franceschetto in one night at play lost 14,000 florins, and accused the Pope, Cardinal Riario, with whom he played, of having cheated. See Villari, *Niccolò Machiavelli*, Introd., vol. i. p. 77.

³ Ald. Guidoni wrote to Ercole, March 3, 1487, 'that Lorenzo had urged him to communicate this marriage to his master. *Atti e mem.*, i. 292. Cf. Reumont, ii. 329 sq.; Cipolla, p. 643. Franceschetto was born in Naples in 1449.

⁴ Lorenzo himself notified this marriage to the orator of Ferrara (Guidoni to Ercole, March 3, 1487; *Atti e mem.*, i. 292).

⁵ See in Buser, *Doc.*, p. 506, a letter of Louis XI. to the Cardinal-Archbishop of Mâcon, dated May 27, 1483, telling him to ask the Pope for the Abbey of Fontdoulce, of the Order of St. Benedict, in the diocese of Saintes, for "Jehan de Medicis, fils de mon cousin Laurens." Louis announced that he had also written to the Pope on this subject. See also Hergenröther, *Leonis X. Pont. Regesta*, Fribourg in Brisgau, 1885; but this cardinal often quoted Roscoe as an authority.

added the bishopric of Aix but for the objection of Sixtus IV. to place the mitre on the head of a baby; but to console the father this same Pontiff named the baby apostolic protonotary (1483), and from that day he was called Messer Giovanni.¹ King Ferrante also granted several livings to this little priest, as a just reward, he said, for the services Lorenzo had rendered him.²

But if there was a fear of scandal in granting the mitre, how much greater for the gift of the hat? Innocent VIII. hesitated; he considered that it would be at least premature. In insisting, Lorenzo hid his personal interest behind a Florentine interest. Milan, Venice, Naples, and France were represented in the Sacred College, but Florence was not. He pressed for hurry because he felt old before his time. In June 1487 his ambassador, Lanfredini, a well-tryed diplomatist, was supported by the cardinals Sforza, Borgia, La Balue, and Zeno, who, though divided upon all other questions, were united upon this one.³ Better still, he endeavoured to ameliorate the difficulties of the Pope's position. He begged the princes to show consideration for the father of the faithful, and not to despair of him, seeing that he neither wished nor was able to go to war.⁴ He prayed "the magnificent" Bernardo Oricellaro, otherwise Rucellai, to complain to the

¹ *Ricordi di Lorenzo*, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 299 sq. Desjardins (i. 190, n. 3) quotes the sources from the Florentine archives, and published (p. 189, 190) two letters of Louis on this subject, one of February 3, 1483, in French, the other of February 17, 1483, in bad Italian. In both there is mention made of William of Estouteville, Cardinal of Rouen, died at eighty this same year, who exercised a great influence in Rome in favour of the Florentines. On p. 190, note, is indicated a letter of this cardinal to Lorenzo, dated December 17, 1483, in which he implores him to make the law give way in favour of the unfortunate family of Niccolò Buonaparte.

² Text in Desjardins, i. 214.

³ See Reumont, ii. 488-490.

⁴ "Cum la santità sua usare bone parole et procedere umanamente, et che la maestà sua (Ferrante) non dovea far signo di disperarsi del papa, nè altre dimostratione gagliarde, presertim sapendo che la santità sua non si trovava in termini da fare guerra, la quale, quando volessi fare, non li sarebbe permessa" (Taberna to the Duke of Milan, June 15, 1487; *Arch. Sforz.*, copies, No. 1610, f. 333 v°).

King of Naples of everything that was done to irritate the Pontiff.¹

To these serviceable words, evidently meant to be repeated, Lorenzo for some time added serviceable actions of an immediate efficacy. He was scarcely reconciled with Innocent VIII. when he persuaded Boccolino Gozzoni, citizen of Osimo in the Marches, who had seized his country from the Holy See and had declared himself its lord, to return it for a sum of money—a remarkable triumph of policy, for Boccolino held to his conquest so much, that he was on the point of offering to proclaim himself feudatory of Bajazet if he would guarantee him Osimo and Jesi.² Thus Lorenzo paid in advance—a good method of striking a good bargain.

If he was in a hurry about the hat, the Pope was in a hurry about the marriage; between both questions the connection is evident. It was hard to give a cardinal's hat to a child, but it was harder still to give a slip of a girl to a worthless man of forty,³ not to mention that Florence disliked princely marriages; and to silence evil tongues, Lorenzo was bound without delay to marry his other daughters, still far from being marriageable, to Florentines.⁴ He would have preferred to keep Maddalena a little longer. His wife Clarissa, struck down by a mortal disease, only asked to end her days in peace, and the future son-in-law, in spite of his birth, did not present

¹ "Per l'ultimo cavallaro che expedi ad Napoli, scrisse al Me^o Bernardo Oricellaro in nome de la sua M^{ta} si dolesse col sign. Re de li modi che si usavano ad irritare il pontefice" (Taberna to the Duke, July 27, 1487; *ibid.*, f. 351). Of the same, September 2, 1487, f. 354, fresh instances in the same sense.

² The documents referring to this matter are in Rosmini, *Vita di Trivulzio*, ii. 158 sq. Cf. Infessura, vol. iii. part ii. p. 1217; Landucci, *Diario*, p. 62, 63; *Ann. Eccl.*, 1487, § 7, vol. xxx. p. 141.

³ Franceschetto was thirty-nine years old.

⁴ "Lorenzo, per dimostratione che non ha animo a volersi imparentare con potentati altrimenti, pubblicato che avrà l'affinità con il figliuolo del papa, marita le altre sue figliuole, quantunque siano fanciulle, qui in Fiorenza" (Ald. Guidoni to Ercola, March 16, 1487; *Atti e mem.*, i. 293). Lucrezia married Giacomo Salviati; Contessina, Pietro Ridolfi. Luigia, promised to one of the Medici, died before her marriage (note of Cappelli, *ibid.*, i. 315, appendix).

himself in a favourable light.¹ Nevertheless, in the beginning of November 1487, the dying woman had to start for Rome.²

Grave as a Roman matron who had never been influenced by Florentine nobility, she was received, as well as her children, with every honour. Even her father, the turbulent Virginio Orsini, who had from the beginning of this pontificate lived in a state of war with the Holy See, came in for his share. All the Orsini, like him, the object of ruthless persecution, were recalled, and accorded their ancient power in the Eternal City. Upon the occasion of a great banquet given to his guests on Sunday, November 18, Innocent VIII. presented his daughter-in-law with a jewel valued at eight thousand ducats, and his son with one worth two thousand.³ The contract was signed on January 20, 1488.⁴ We are not so sure of the date of the marriage, but between these two acts much time cannot have been lost; Innocent VIII. was in too great a hurry.⁵

Clarissa returned at once to Florence with the too youthful bride, whom she was allowed to keep with her for the few days she had still to live. Lorenzo was vexed by this haste, which made him behind-hand with the dowry,⁶ and by the Pope's carelessness in fulfilling his pecuniary engagements, an inevitable worry for the married pair.⁷ Franceschetto, who

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¹ Lorenzo had an explanation on this matter with his ambassador Lanfredini, and even with the Pope. See some of his letters to Innocent, published by Moreni.

² Sunday, September 4, 1487, Guidoni announced to his master Clarissa's departure on the following Sunday, the 11th; *Atti e mem.*, i. 297.

³ Ald. Guidoni to Ercole, November 24, 1487; *Atti e mem.*, i. 297.

⁴ Gregorovius, *Das Archiv der Notare des Capitols in Rom und das Protocolbuch des Notars Camillus de Beneimbene*, Munich, 1872, p. 503; Reumont, ii. 347.

⁵ Roscoe says that the marriage was celebrated at Rome in 1488; Sismondi (vii. 233), Reumont (*Tavole Sincrone et Lorenzo il Mo.*, ii. 347), in November 1487. Fabroni (p. 171) speaks of the marriage of Maddalena and those of her two sisters, which he places in 1487. The Roman wedding was thus a little earlier. It seems improbable that this wedding should precede the contract. In any case, it was before April 10, 1488, as a text of this date proves.

⁶ Text in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 312.

⁷ "A me pare che N. S. in questa e nell' altre cose sue vadi molto freddo e che insino a ora abbi a gangheri quel poco che ha; che oltre al bene del sign. Francesco, mi duole che la figliuola mia abbi a stentare, e sono mezo disperato di questa

knew his father, expected some principality from his father-in-law—Piombino, Città di Castello, or Sienna even. But his father-in-law would neither break up the Florentine states nor forego any of his most casual expectations. He referred the matter to the Pope, though knowing him indisposed to consider it. “His Holiness,” he wrote to the unfortunate Franceschetto, “is so constituted that the least inkling he gets of my affairs fills him with distrust, and disposes him to do exactly the reverse of what I tell him. As for you, I only ask you to remember your children. Do not expect our Lord to do so of his own accord; he must be pricked like an ox.”¹ Was it really the slowness and uncertainty of an ox? It looks rather like a fox’s trick or a dishonest father’s, for whom the marriage of a son or a daughter is only an occasion to cheat or get rid of an encumbrance.

At this point the Medici entered upon a period of domestic troubles. They sought and offered changes. When Franceschetto, impatient at being only a husband *in partibus*, came for his wife, there were feasts in his honour, to the great joy of the Florentines, who had been deprived of them for ten long years, from the tragic day Giuliano fell bathed in his blood. The palace of Jacopo de’ Pazzi, who had then been flung into the Arno, henceforth belonged to the Pope’s son, for whom was shouted when he passed, “Cybo e Palle!”² But when Piero de’ Lorenzo returned to his country with the young wife he had just married, the death of Bianca, his father’s sister and the wife of Guglielmino de’ Pazzi, was the reason why there was no solemn entry, and why the nuptial banquet

e dell’ altre cose, veduta la lunghezza, la varietà e la poca cura che se hanno alle cose di costà” (Lorenzo to Lanfredini, April 10, 1488). In the preface M. Isidore del Lungo places it before a letter of Matteo Franco, published by him in the *Arch. Stor.*, 3rd ser., vol. ix. part i. p. 34. The passage quoted is on p. 35. M. del Lungo’s work, and the letter of Matteo Franco, Maddalena’s servant, show us a touching picture of mistress and servant.

¹ Rome, March 10, 1488; text in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 334–336. The passage quoted is on p. 336.

² We know that the *palle* or balls belonged to the Medici arms. To cheer them was a way of declaring oneself the family’s partisan.

was celebrated at Careggi.¹ In rapid succession Lorenzo lost Luigia, his youngest daughter, betrothed to Pier Francesco de' Medicis, and his wife Clarissa, whose one consolation it had been to have at her death-bed "the apple of her eye," her daughter Maddalena. To get rid of Franceschetto, he was sent on a mission to Perugia, and Lorenzo, a hard-hearted and indifferent husband, went off in this hour of bereavement to nurse his gout at the waters of Filetta.²

He so dreaded sombre sights that he only returned four or five days after the funeral, which took place the very day of the death, "without demonstration or pomp."³ The sad Clarissa had held such a small place in his existence, that the orator of Ferrara, Aldovrandino Guidoni, only informed Ercole d'Este of her long illness after the fatal result, and he added negligently, "I did not trouble to tell you sooner, as it was a matter of so little importance,"⁴—an eloquent funeral oration, which shows us the wife's insignificance and the husband's egotism.⁵

The hat waited for another year. Innocent VIII. visibly shrank from placing it on the head of a boy of fourteen, but being pricked like an ox, he yielded, to the great indignation of the pontifical Rinaldi, the annalist of the

¹ Ald. Guidoni to Ercole, May 22 and 29, 1488; *Atti e mem.*, i. 301.

² Filetta, near Macerato; Henry of Luxembourg, attacked with the same disease that carried him off, had in olden times drunk these waters. See G. Villani, l. ix. c. 51, vol. xiii. p. 468.

³ Ald. Guidoni to Ercole, August 1 and 4, 1488; *Atti e mem.*, i. 303; Isid. del Lungo, preface quoted. Cf. Machiavelli, viii. 132 A, B; Ammirato, xxv. 177; Reumont, ii. 347.

⁴ "Non mi son curato darne avviso con più celerità, perchè non mi pareva fosse cosa importasse altrimenti" (Ald. Guidoni, August 1, 1488, p. 303). Fabroni was one of those who helped to spread the legend, "Conjunctissime vixit cum Clarice uxore." She could not come from Cafaggiolo without an express permission. She complained that Poliziano said to her "mille villanie," to which she added, "Se è di vostro consentimento, sono paziente" (Clarissa to Lorenzo, May 28, 1479, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 288).

⁵ From the moral point of view, Clarissa seems to have been her husband's superior, if we may judge from one of her letters that M. Agenore Gelli published in his *Lorenzo de' Medici, Discorso letto nel R. Liceo Dante*, April 6, 1873, p. 21-22. See on Clarissa three letters of Lucrecia Tornabuoni to Piero de' Medicis and several others on Lorenzo's marriage, published by M. Guasti, Florence, 1859.

Holy See.¹ The promotion, already known of in Florence towards the end of February 1489, was only officially announced on March 10.² On the eve, Giovanni de' Medicis was nominated with two others *in petto*. The Pope demanded secrecy, wishing to defer the publication for three years, and, to secure Lorenzo's consent, promised him, in case of a vacancy in the Holy See, that his son would be proclaimed and take part in the conclave. Lorenzo was dissatisfied; he preferred a bird in the hand to two in the bush. To tie Innocent's hands he did not keep the secret as requested; on the very day he communicated the good news to some powerful friends; he ordered feasting, intending next day to excuse himself to the court of Rome by alleging that he could not prevent it.³ He regarded himself as having a right to full satisfaction: to gain cardinals and the Pope, had he not spent two hundred thousand florins?⁴

Indeed, he lost nothing by waiting. The blessed hat arrived after three years had been spent by the young cardinal in study at Pisa.⁵ The consecration took place on March 10, 1492, in the Abbey of Fiesole, in the presence of the foreign ambassadors; for it was no simple citizen who was invested in the purple. Afterwards the young cardinal made a magnificent entry into Florence. Before him went the bishops, the priests, three hundred of the laity robed in silk, and five hundred horses. He went first to the Signory, and then to his father's. On the next day, Sunday, splendid ceremonies were celebrated in the Duomo; eight bishops chanted a solemn mass. After the mass the ambassadors and sixty

¹ *Ann. Eccl.*, 1489, § 19, 21, vol. xxx. p. 168; G. Cambi, *Del.*, xxi. 63.

² See Ald. Guidoni's letters, February 23, March 2, 9, 10, 16, 1489; *Atti e mem.*, i. 306, 307. Lanfredini announced the nomination to Lorenzo in a letter dated from Rome, March 7 (Nonæ Martii). It is in *Atti e mem.*, i. 247. Cf. Roscoe and Hergenröther.

³ Lorenzo to Lanfredini, not dated. Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 300; Lorenzo to Ercole, March 10, 1489, to announce to him the nomination; *Atti e mem.*, i. 247.

⁴ Al. Rinuccini, p. 147.

⁵ See Hergenröther, *Leonis X. Pont. Regesta*.

of the principal Florentines met at a great banquet. Though ill, the host nevertheless welcomed the guests and did the honours. The Cardinal received several presents; from the Signory a piece of wrought silver which weighed more than ten pounds, and was worth more than ten thousand florins; from the state community, and even from the Jews, rich and handsome silver vases. It is said that he refused everything but the gifts offered by his own family, but the testimony of Giovanni Cambi permits us to doubt this.¹

Appointed pontifical legate in the Florentine state, Giovanni went to Rome to prostrate himself at the Pope's feet on March 12.² His father wrote him a sensible letter upon his new duties: "You are not only the youngest of living cardinals, but the youngest that has ever existed."³ The success was all the greater for this; according to Machiavelli, "this affair was the ladder to help the Medici to heaven."⁴ To see the conclusion, we have been forced to anticipate time. We will now retrace our steps.

Having established his sons and married his daughters, Lorenzo had still to find a place for his worthless son-in-law in order to accomplish his duty as father of a family. Whose land would he seize to constitute him a principality? That of the enemy of all times, Count Girolamo, who, since the death of his father, Sixtus IV., had retired to his domains of

¹ "Che costò al comune, con quel gli fu donato dappoi fu chardinale, scudi 50 m. d'oro" (G. Cambi, *Del.*, xxi. 54).

² Manfredo Manfredi to Ercole, March 13, 1492; *Atti e mem.*, i. 311; Letters of Pietro Delfino, general of the Camaldules; Flor., March 11, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 305; Rinuccini, p. 145; Cambi, *Del.*, xxi. 63; Ammirato, xxvi. 184, 186; Roscoe, append. 65, vol. iii. p. 336. The ceremonies are given in length in Burckhardt, *Diario*, ann. 1490, p. 162-177, Florence, 1854.

³ See this letter in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 308; Roscoe, append. 66, vol. iii. p. 330; and Capponi, append. 6, vol. ii. p. 528.

⁴ Machiavelli, viii. 134 A. See the details in the *Lettere di Jacopo da Volterra a Papa Innocenzo VIII.*, published by Marco Tabarrini in the *Arch. Stor.*, 3rd ser., part vii. vol. ii. p. 11, 17, 18, letters of the 11th and 20th September, and of 6th October 1487. Five other letters of the same are in vol. x. part ii. p. 7-19 of the *Arch. Stor.* They bear the date of January 22, 1488, and treat of the ambassador Jacopo Gherardi of Volterra's stay in Milan. Cf. Cipolla, p. 644.

Forli and Imola. Girolamo was not unsupported; his wife being the illegitimate daughter of the last Duke of Milan, he counted on Il Moro, and even in Rome the powerful Cardinal Giuliano de la Rovere made a point of honour to defend his relative. But the Church was altogether hostile to him, as to all the barons and lords established upon the ecclesiastical territories.¹ In striving to replace him by Franceschetto Cybo, Lorenzo followed the true Florentine policy of surrounding Florence with inoffensive princelings, gravitating toward its orbit.² Indeed this design dated from the far-off day of Innocent VIII.'s elevation to the tiara, before there was any idea of marriage; hardly a month later (September 1484) Florence made the first overtures to Rome for "la nouveauté de l'état du Comte," and she found the Pope disposed to do more than allow the authority of his name.³ The negotiation had dragged, as the pontifical surroundings did not inspire confidence,⁴ and the threatened Riario had Forli well guarded.⁵ Maddalena's marriage with Franceschetto was a strong stimulus to revive the project, only it was no longer of conquest but of assassination that there was question. The documents speak of sending not an army, but a few sworn men "to do this thing" at Faenza after the feast of Christmas.⁶ If "this thing"

¹ See a letter of Ald. Guidoni, April 25, 1488; *Atti e mem.*, i. 300.

² "Sua M^{te} saria di volontà che Forli ed Imola fossero più presto di signori particolari che si fossero di altra sign. potente . . . e quando pure detto stato dovesse toccare a verun potentato, che lui saria di parer di voler più presto Milano che la chiesa" (*ibid.*). Guidoni afterwards explains Lorenzo's reasons for preferring Milan. It is like a course in politics.

³ Mi par comprendere che il papa desidererebbe la novità dello stato del conte, ma non vorrebbe fare sed solum permettere . . . e che quegli signori faccessino come da loro" (Guidantonio Vespucci, orator in Rome, to Lorenzo, September 24, 1484; Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 316).

⁴ "Pensate se voi volete stare in sulle parole o un breve di credentia . . . o se pur volete altre maxime circa questo caso, quando vi bisognassi far spesa, perchè io non mi fido molto della stabilità di questi che sono presso al papa" (The same, December 14, 1484; *ibid.*, p. 318).

⁵ "Che in questo caso siano necessarie questo cose, prima uno grande secreto et una extrema simulatione, non far dimonstratione nessuna adversa alli amici del conte per non lo fare ombrare" (*ibid.*). "Si conculse la impresa essere difficile per la gran guardia sa fare il conte fuori di Furl" (*ibid.*, p. 317).

⁶ "Si è concluso che facte le feste Savello si parta et sia con voi et vada a

came to nothing before three years of study, it was because Lorenzo wanted more than a verbal adhesion from the Pope before striking.¹

Had he obtained it, or was he weary of waiting? As a fact, on April 14, 1488, Riario, surrounded by conspirators, fell under their daggers. His naked body was flung out of the window, and the populace dragged it by the hair through the town, so hated were his cupidity and cruelty.²

Without knowing anything of the plot, the people knew the result.³ Florence felt keenly surprised, and still more keenly satisfied: "Of the Count's family she wanted nothing to remain."⁴ As for the Pope, if he showed displeasure, he was not inconsolable,⁵ and only the directly accused assassins might fear his threats.⁶ Marino Sanuto in his daily chronicle formally accuses Lorenzo.⁷ The two principal murderers, Lodovico and Checco dell' Orso, wrote to him (April 19) that they had accomplished "this more divine than human work" for the good of the Republic and for their own interest, to draw the people out of hell. "The Pope is pleased," they wrote, but to obtain his support and help, they implore the intervention of the magni-

Bologna, et che, parendo a voi, si deputi el luogo a Faenza, dove se debba praticare questa cosa con huomini fidati" (*Doc.*, p. 318).

¹ See Cipolla, p. 646, on the facts preceding this murder.

² The principal authorities on the murder are Leone Cobelli (*Cronache Forlivesi*, p. 307 sq.), who was present, and two letters addressed to Lorenzo on April 19 and 21, and published in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 318, 320. See also Borselli, xxiii. 907; Allegretti, xxiii. 823; Sanuto, xxii. 1244; Infessura, vol. iii. part ii. p. 1219; Bruto, l. viii., dans *Burm.*, vol. viii. part i. p. 213; Machiavelli, viii. 133 A, and *Discorsi*, l. iii. c. vi. p. 262 A.

³ "Nientedimeno non intendo che di tale trattato se ne sia sentito cosa alcuna di qua innanzi il fatto" (Ald. Guidoni to Ercole, April 24, 1488; *Atti e mem.*, i. 300).

⁴ "A questa città è piaciuto il caso successo del conte, et sia certa V. Ecc. che qui si vorria non gliene rimanesse coda de la famiglia del conte" (*ibid.*).

⁵ "Il papa mostra gli rincresse il caso del conte Girolamo, e sin qui se ne passa molto leggermente" (*ibid.*).

⁶ "Il Mco Lorenzo per le cose di Forlì è in parere che il papa faccia per effetto molto peggio che non dica in parole" (*ibid.*, April 25, p. 300).

⁷ "Si diceva ch'era stato opera di Lor. de' Med. e di Giov. Bentivoglio, per dare quelle terre al sign. Franceschetto Cybo" (Sanuto, xxii. 1244). This formal testimony does not prevent Roscoe from invoking the worthless authority of Pignotti to prove that Lorenzo was not accused by his contemporaries.

ficient Lorenzo.¹ Stefano of Castrocaro, whom he had formerly sent to the lord of Faenza, begging him to see the conspirators, and show them every consideration,² giving him also the details of the drama (April 21); and when the anxious murderers asked what the Florentines would do, "They will dance," Stefano replied, "to the music of the others; the magnificent Lorenzo wishes to end his days in peace."³ The music of this lord, who sought repose in the blood of others, was not such as would please all his instruments. He refused them access to Florentine territory, and forced them to seek shelter in Rome,⁴ which they did, sending a Parthian shot after him. "They are satisfied," they say, "that they have avenged the innocent blood of Giuliano de' Medicis."⁵ This indirect reproach did not move the prudent Lorenzo; he had not shown himself in the matter, and he escaped the danger of the consequences. Since he had satisfaction, this was a clever stroke.

He was forced to content himself, however, with a sterile vengeance. The fruit he had watched ripen he did not gather. Caterina Sforza, the victim's widow, was more far-seeing than the rebels who essayed to draw the chestnuts out of the fire for Lorenzo and Franceschetto. She persuaded them to let her enter the *rocca* to induce those who commanded to give themselves up. They consented, thinking they had nothing to fear from her, and retained her children as hostages. But once entered, she fired upon the besiegers. These threatened to kill her children; she replied that she had one still at Imola, one on the point of birth, and she added, with an indecent gesture, the means of producing others. Thus she intimidated her enemies,

¹ See this letter in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 319.

² "Io le dissi che havendomi V M^{tia} mandato al sign. di Faenza, mi havea anche commesso vedessi di aboccharmi con loro et farli intendere per quanto potevate, che naturalmente eravate disposto al favore et beneficio loro" (Letter of Stefano of Castrocaro, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 220).

³ "In ultimo me adomandorono quello faranno e Fior. Io li dissi: loro balleranno secondo che altri sonerà. . . . V. M. intendeva vivere in più tranquillità e pace che li fussi possibile questo resto dell'età" (*ibid.*, p. 323).

⁴ Ald. Guidoni to Ercole, May 8, 1488; *Atti e mem.*, i. 301.

⁵ Letter of Stefano, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 324.

and remained mistress or recovered her position, and on April 29, Ottaviano, her son and Riario's, was proclaimed lord of Forli and Imola.¹ Lorenzo did not show annoyance. As a politician he measured the worth of this virago, resolved to become, if necessary, a Mother Gigogne, and he married her at once to Giovanni de' Medicis, grandson of one of Cosimo's brothers, and father of that other Giovanni who was later celebrated in the wars as the chief of the Black Band.² This was how the valiant Caterina entered the powerful family which her first husband wished to destroy, and which, by its ambitious reprisals, had undertaken to destroy both him and her.³

As for Franceschetto Cybo, he remained the landless Franceschetto as before. If his father-in-law, Lorenzo, succeeded better elsewhere, it was on his own and on Florence's account. Galeotto Manfredi wanted to sell Faenza to the Venetians, a matter of alarm for Florence, who by this would become the neighbour of Venice. On May 31, 1488, he was assassinated by his wife, Francesca, whose father, Giovanni II., Bentivoglio of Bologna, had given the arms into her hands. Feminine jealousy thus came to the aid of the victorious policy, and the Florentines gained nothing; their near neighbours, the Bentivogli, seized Faenza. Upon this news, known next day in Florence, "all the town was excited," and manifested a desire that Galeotto's son should succeed him.⁴ As this was also the wish of the people, and the peasants of the valley of Lamona, those faithful subjects, virtually relying upon the neighbouring Republic, seized the government in the name of the young Astorra Manfredi, placed themselves under the protection of

¹ Cobelli, *Cronache Forlivesi*; Infessura, vol. iii. part ii. p. 1220; Bruto, l. viii., in Burm., vol. viii. part i. p. 213; Machiavelli, vii. 133 A, and *Discorsi*, l. ii. c. vi. p. 262 A; Sismondi, vii. 251; Capponi, ii. 156.

² Giovanni of the Black Band was baptized Lodovico. See the genealogy of the Medici in Litta, Reumont, &c.

³ On this marriage see Pietro Nasi's letters to Lorenzo, Faenza, February 3, 1489, and of Dionisio Pucci to the same, Faenza, August 29, 1489, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 325, 328, as well as other documents of 1489 and 1490, quoted by Reumont, ii. 374. Cf. Sismondi, vii. 254.

⁴ Ald. Guidoni to Ercole, June 2, 1488; *Atti e mem.*, i. 301.

Florence, and easily obtained soldiers,¹ all the more easily as reward was anticipated. Lorenzo retained on the frontier the stout fortress of Piancaldoli, once taken from the Florentines by Count Girolamo.² This time, by an unusual chance, right was upon their side, as the orator of Ferrara recognised: the restitution had often been promised.³

This place retaken, Lorenzo could afford to show clemency to Bentivoglio. He had insisted on holding him, and retained him in spite of the demands of the prisoner's wife and the ambassadors themselves.⁴ When the *rocca* of Faenza fell at last (June 9), he opened the cage and let the prisoner out, after some long conversation with him, "in which everything between them was well thrashed out;"⁵ a thrashing for which Bentivoglio paid well, for he neither obtained that his daughter should be re-established at Faenza nor that his gracious gaoler should allow her by marriage to ally herself with the Medici;⁶ which was not the way to make a friend of this neighbour.

But what did that matter to Lorenzo? Henceforth recognised as the protector of Forli, Imola, and Faenza, he ruled over the little states of Romagna, and his weight and influence were everywhere recognised. Increasingly fond of pleasure, and bored by business, which interfered with his enjoyments, he smoothed down all differences, and always threatened to side with the offended party. The menace generally sufficed to establish equilibrium. His glory, certainly not an untar-

¹ Ald. Guidoni to Ercole, June 5, p. 302.

² Before Galeotto's murder, April 3, this affair of Piancaldoli was the subject of a long letter of Ald. Guidoni; *Atti e mem.*, i. 298. On this fact see *Ricordanze di Tribaldo de' Rossi* in *Delizie degli Eruditi Toscani*, xxiii. 241.

³ "Si seguita la impresa di Piancaldoli, quale già fu-loro, e più volte le fu promesso restituircelo" (Ald. Guidoni to Ercole, April 24, 1488; *Atti e mem.*, i. 300).

⁴ The same, June 9, p. 302.

⁵ The same, June 15, p. 302.

⁶ The same, August 17, p. 303, in note 2 of Cappelli. On this affair see as well *Cronaca di Faenza*, p. 240; *Cronaca Forlivese*, p. 346; Burselli, xxiii. 907; Allegretti, xxiii. 823; Graziani, *Cronaca Perugina* in *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., vol. xvi. part i. p. 675; Infessura, vol. iii. part ii. p. 1221; *Diario Ferrarese*, xxvi. 280; Bruto, l. viii. in *Burm.*, vol. viii. part i. p. 214; Ammirato, xxvi. 183.

nished glory, and stained by perfidies, faithlessness, violence, and crimes, but none the less indisputable, was his foreign policy.

At the very time that the Emperor's war with Venice drew to an end, Lorenzo softened the mutual resentment of Innocent VIII. and of Ferrante, the one as much, and perhaps more, irritated by the tribute refused than by the massacre of the Neapolitan barons, the other threatening to appear before Rome sword in hand. The mediator could count upon Ferrante, remembering that he had been the means of ending the last war and preventing its renewal; upon Innocent VIII., whom he had rid of a son that no prince could accept as a son-in-law; upon Louis XI., who was attentive to the common economical interests of the two states, and had kindly meddled in the negotiations for the hat;¹ and upon Lodovico il Moro, whom he had largely served in persuading the Duke of Calabria not to rush to arms in defence of his son-in-law, Gian Galeaz. His relations with Mathias Corvinus were of a friendly nature. The Sultan of Egypt showed his esteem by sending him a giraffe and a tame lion;² and we have seen that he enjoyed Mahomet II.'s favour. Thus he secured peace abroad and tranquillity at home, though his country had hitherto been too much accustomed to the clash of arms. This peace lasted from the taking of Sarzana until his death.

The least contented of the Florentines thanked him for this respite, and were at the same time flattered by the honours rendered to the first of their citizens, to him who henceforth personified the Republic. If his negotiations, as we have seen, were kept secret, as much from personal interest as from political necessity, there is no reason to rob him of the honour as well as the responsibility, as Sismondi does, with the intention of

¹ Buser (p. 288 *sq.*) rapidly sums up the correspondence between Lorenzo and Sassetti, his envoy in France, who had done good service there, as did in Florence Comines.

² Pietro Bibbiena to Clarissa naming the Sultan's presents, undated, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 337. See also Sismondi, vii. 275; and Capponi, ii. 159.

raising by comparison his beloved Albizzi, whom he makes the champion of "liberty," and even of the democracy. It is unjust to see nothing but intrigue in Lorenzo's letters to Lanfredini, published by Fabroni. The clever statesman, taken up with projects of foreign intervention, schemed and wished to avert all possible danger. The Duke of Lorraine's victory seemed very great to him,¹ though less than that of the King of Naples, for Ferrante depended on Spain more than René on France.² He pointed out to the Pope three possible courses: to settle matters with the King of Naples by arms, to agree with him, or temporise while awaiting more favourable circumstances. "But in no case," he added, "should His Holiness ask the support of Spain or France."³ An advice as opportune as it was wise. On the next day (September 11, 1489), in presence of the Neapolitan ambassador, Innocent VIII. made public the protest of August 11, which accused Ferrante of having violated the peace, and pronounced him a fallen prince.⁴ While complaining to the Most Christian and Most Catholic kings of his wrongs at the hand of the Neapolitan, he was in treaty with them,⁵ although he recognised that the Most Catholic King was unreliable, and that the Most Christian King aspired to the possession both of the Republic of Genoa and of the kingdom of Naples.⁶

That Lorenzo was mixed up in these negotiations is a fact beyond doubt; it was to a Florentine ambassador that the Duke of Calabria declared his father the king ready to treat with the Pope upon reasonable conditions.⁷ This intervention

¹ Lorenzo to Lanfredini, March 24, 1489, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 359-361.

² The same, October 17, 1489; *ibid.*, p. 366.

³ *Ibid.* Cf. another letter the same to the same, August 8, 1489; *ibid.*, p. 361-365, and the analysis in Buser, p. 268-269.

⁴ Infessura, vol. iii. part ii. p. 1229. The Bull of September 11 is in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 340 *seq.*

⁵ Innocent VIII. himself expresses it to Lanfredini (Lanfredini to Lorenzo in *Arch. Stor.*, 3rd ser., 1872, vol. xv. p. 296).

⁶ Lanfredini to Lorenzo, October 23, 1489; letter published by Ag. Gelli in *Arch. Stor.*, 3rd ser., vol. xvi. p. 386.

⁷ Declaration made January 29, 1490. *Carteggio Mediceo*, filza 49-228, in C. de Cherrier, *Histoire de Charles VIII.*, vol. i. p. 341, 2nd edit., Paris, 1870.

was delicate, for Lorenzo held strongly to Ferrante's friendship,¹ and Innocent VIII. spoke of granting Charles VIII. the investiture of the kingdom, and declared himself ready, if he did not obtain the sincere support of the Italian potentates, to cross the Alps and return at once to Italy, escorted by the Ultramontanes.² So bitter was the quarrel, that on the Feast of St. Peter in 1491, Ferrante having, according to custom and treaty, offered a pony, the Pope refused it, because the tribute, fallen into desuetude, had not been added.³ However, peace was made in the beginning of the following December, thanks to Lorenzo.⁴ It was not his fault if in the North this great success was counterbalanced by disaster; if Lodovico il Moro, by his reconciliation with the Duke of Orleans, deprived Florence of the direction of events. The patient spider recommenced at once its broken web, and perhaps, had it not been for death, would have brought it to a happy ending.

Deceived or not in his calculations and hopes, Lorenzo was none the less a very great figure in Europe. He passed for what indeed he was, the master of Florence. The public officers, the Priors, the Ten of War, continued to send out their despatches to the ambassadors of the Republic; but Lorenzo, on his side, sent out his own, and these were considered as so much more important, that the others referred to them.⁵ It was he the neighbouring lords and all those in the pay of the commons recognised and obeyed. With him alone the crowned

¹ Pier Vettori to Lorenzo, Naples, March 9, 1489, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 344-347.

² "Dichiarando che quando sia offeso del Re et non ajutato come si conviene, delibera partirsi et andarsene di là da' monti, dove sarà ben visto, et dove spera non solo poter procedere contra al Re in ogni altro acto, ma ancora si rende certo in breve tempo poter ritornare con favore di ultramontani" (Pandolfini to Lorenzo, July 28, 1490, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 335. Cf. the same, July 8, 1490; *ibid.*, p. 352).

³ Manf. Manfredi to Ercole, July 3, 1491; *Atti e mem.*, i. 309.

⁴ The Pope published the treaty of agreement, January 28, 1492. See *Ann. Eccles.*, 1492, § 10, vol. xxx. p. 190; and Manfredi's letter to Ercole, December 6, 1491, January 31, 1492; *Atti e mem.*, i. 310.

⁵ "Delle cose seguite di qua sappiamo Lor. de' Medici v' informa a pieno; però per ora altrimenti non ci distenderemo. . . . Alle sue lettere ci riferiamo" (Despatch to Francesco Gaddi, December 5, 1480, in Desjardins, i. 189).

heads corresponded; in their eyes he was as much a prince as those who openly bore the name.

At home, on the contrary, Lorenzo was reduced to evasion, and humbly to advance step by step. This is the other side of the picture, but from one point of view it is the right side, for it is rather by his life as a Mécænas than by the success or importance of his negotiations that he plays such a remarkable part in the history of Florence, we may almost say, in the history of humanity.

CHAPTER V.

THE DOMINATION OF LORENZO DE' MEDICIS IN FLORENCE UNTIL HIS DEATH.

1481-1492.

The increasing and ill-concealed absolutism of Lorenzo—Conspiracy repressed (June 1481)—Difficulties in trade—Bad financial state in public and private—The progressive tax or *scala* (1480-87)—Affair of the Gonfaloniers of company (1489)—Lorenzo punishes the Gonfalonier of justice—He maintains order in the public place by severity—The Balie of Seventeen placed above the Council of Seventy (1490)—Reform of the coinage—Jobbing on the *monti*—Lorenzo places and increases his fortune—He protects arts and letters—His literary education—His dilettanteism—His love of pleasure—Angelo Poliziano—Marsilio Ficino and the Platonic Academy—Pico de la Mirandola—Lorenzo's patronage—Opposition to the Pagan spirit—Ghirolamo Savonarola (1483-90)—His self-imposed mission and prophecies—His opposition to Lorenzo—Fra Mariano of Ghinazzano opposes him (1491)—Interview between the dying Lorenzo and Savonarola (April 1492)—Death of Lorenzo (April 8)—The judgment of his contemporaries and of posterity.

LORENZO'S power, which we have seen increase abroad, was strengthened at home from the time of the conspiracy of the Pazzi. The failure of the conspirators and their punishment had been a lesson for those who aspired to imitate them. There was no further danger, as the authors recognise (the most ancient as well as the modern¹), in a town peopled with men more taken up with private trade than with public affairs.² Lorenzo felt this too well for him to dream of abdicating in favour of his son, as his hardly critical biographer, Roscoe, asserts. He even projected, when he had arrived at the legal age of forty-five, to have himself elected for life Gonfalonier

¹ See J. Pitti, *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., vol. i. p. 25; Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir.*, c. iv. vol. iii. p. 43; P. Marchese, *Scritti Vari*, San Marco di Firenze, l. ii. p. 125; Canestrini, p. 238.

² J. Pitti, *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., vol. i. p. 25.

of justice,¹ or rather injustice, as Rinuccini says,² a queer legal scruple in committing the most flagrant illegality, and one the most contrary to Florentine traditions. Meanwhile, he received the princes and the foreign ambassadors, and feasted them with princely magnificence. He did not like others to hold sumptuous receptions, even at marriages or domestic rejoicings. He jealously supervised the actions, friendships, and interests of his compatriots. He formed sects and secret societies unknown to each other, who equalised the balance between the factions. The orators of Florence were named "his orators."³ Ammirato called him the "prince of the government,"⁴ which in reality he was. This he wished to be, and, if he were not, at least to enjoy the appearance and consciousness of power.

Herein lies his peculiarity. He feigned humility, and lived with his family and friends as a simple citizen; he gave way and yielded the path to everybody older than himself, and he recommended his son to imitate him in his embassies,⁵ although he well knew he would be received on the same footing with the greatest personages, even with the Duke of Milan.⁶ He even did not neglect to recommend him, when necessary, to adopt an attitude that would distinguish him among his colleagues.⁷ When he was not angry or ill-humoured with them, he modestly visited the messengers from Italian powers, and even simple captains of war in their inn.

¹ J. Pitti, *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., vol. i. p. 26.

² Al. Rinuccini, p. 137.

³ "L'oratori soy . . ." (The Milanese orator to the Duke of Milan, December 23, 1482; *Arch. Sforz.*, copies, No. 1610, f. 321. The name of this orator is not in the document. It is probably Sacramoro.)

⁴ Ammirato, xxvi. 184.

⁵ "Portati gravemente e costumatamente e con umanità verso gli altri pari tuoi, guardandoti di non preceder loro, se fossino di più età di te; poichè per essere mio figliolo, non sei però altro che cittadino di Firenze, come sono ancor loro" (Lorenzo to Piero, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 264).

⁶ G. Cambi, *Del.*, xxi. 39. Capponi (ii. 159) quotes a letter found in Fabroni (*Doc.*, p. 296), but which says nothing of the rank of Piero at the Milan festivities.

⁷ "Ma quando poi parrà a Giovanni di presentarti al papa *separatamente*, prima informati bene di tutte le cerimonie si usano, ti presenterai," &c. (Lorenzo to Piero, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 264).

In the assemblies, where he shrank from appearing, Pier Filippo Pandolfini, "the first citizen of the town, after him and his voice in the councils," wrote Aldovrandino Guidoni,¹ served him as spokesman. In each office he maintained, according to the habit of his father and grandfather, a confidential chancellor, who knew his thoughts and wishes, and was the real chief of the office to which he belonged. As well, he had beside him another chancellor, his secretary-general, as we should call him to-day, Piero de' Bibbiena, through whose hands everything passed.² In this way he spread his net everywhere, and for the moment at least reduced his victim to resignation and insensibility.

The most singular thing is, that men usually far-seeing accepted the change. "He is not a lord of Florence," wrote a Milanese orator, "but a citizen, and though he has rather more authority than he should have in his position, he is bound to show patience, and to be ruled by the wishes of the majority."³ Now, in the same despatch the writer of these lines calls those who had hitherto been called "orators of the Republic" "orators of Lorenzo,"⁴ a naïve contradiction, which shows us what we ought to think upon the subject. Lorenzo was the real master, and a master who henceforth punished without encountering any resistance, though he struck upon the slightest suspicion. Let us give an example of his severities, often so little justified.

On June 2, 1481, there were arrested, Marotto Baldovinetti and Battista Frescobaldi, two citizens of good family, but fallen from their rank. They were accused of having conspired, like the Pazzi, to kill Lorenzo in the Duomo during the Feast

¹ "P. F. Pandolfini in consiglio è il cuor del M^{co} Lorenzo, ed egli è il primo cittadino della città" (To Ercole, May 14, 1488; *Atti e mem.*, i. 301).

² Capponi, ii. 161; Cipolla, p. 666.

³ "Attento che la non è signore di Firenze, ma cittadino, et licet de qualche auctorità più che non li tocharia per la sorte sua, tamen in simili casi è necessitato anchora luy ad havere patientia et conformarse col volere de' più" (To the Duke of Milan, December 23, 1482; *Arch. Sforz.*, copies, No. 1610, f. 321).

⁴ See *supra*, p. 404.

of Pentecost with poisoned daggers.¹ Marotto was suspected of having seen recently, in Rome, Girolamo Riario, the old enemy of the Medici.² As for Battista, once a devoted servant, and an envoy of the Republic at Pera, he had helped Lorenzo in obtaining the scandalous extradition of Bandini. But the proverb says, "A friend as far as the purse." He pretended to have given his own money for that mission, and he could not obtain a reimbursement. Was this enough to arm his hand? and was his hand armed? We do not know, but torture loosened his tongue, and made him confess the untrue as well as the true. He accused Veri Acciajuoli and exculpated Riario, but from the confession itself it was seen that Neri could not have been very culpable; a strange conspirator, who advised that the ancient accomplice of the Pazzi should be left out of the plot, in virtue of this other proverb, "A scalded cat dreads cold water."³

But in order to condemn, nothing more was necessary; the two inculpated persons were hanged, on June 6, from the windows of the Bargello, and as their friend Francesco Balducci had taken flight, his brother was hanged with them, although he had condemned the plot.⁴ Such was the distribution of justice by the Medici. Antonio Montecatino, orator of Ferrara, believed in the reality of this conspiracy, which would, he said, have made everything topsy-turvy, for "these poor

¹ Bartolommeo Sgrippi, Chancellor of Montecatino, to Montecatino, then at Ferrara, June 6, 1483; *Atti e mem.*, i. 253. Rinuccini (p. 134) states that the attempt should have taken place May 31, Ascension Day. He is mistaken, since the preventive arrestation was on June 2nd. The testimony of the Modena chancellor is conclusive, written as it was at the same time. Luca Landucci confirms it. See *Diario*, p. 38.

² "E ancora non si è potuto intendere se questi aveano pratica con il prefato conte" (Bartolommeo Sgrippi, June 3, 1481; *Atti e mem.*, i. 253). "Hieronymus quoque comes belli tempore ejus vitæ sæpius per sicarios insidiatus est" (Nic. Valori, *Vita Laur.*, p. 60).

³ "Perchè il predetto conte avea avuto assai carico, che al presente rifiuteria questo" (B. Sgrippi, June 6, 1483; *Atti e mem.*, i. 254).

⁴ Bart. Sgrippi, June 6; *Atti e mem.*, i. 254. Cf. Al. Rinuccini, p. 134; Allegretti, xxiii. 808; Ammirato, xxv. 148. Leon. Morelli (*Del.*, xix. 196) places this execution on June 13. He is contradicted by Sgrippi, Rinuccini, Landucci, and the priorista Rinuccini, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 224.

people (*poveretti*) had come with too much ardour." He relates, that to the visitors who came to console them, they replied that they regretted not their life, but the freedom of Florence, which they had desired to obtain, as all Florentines should do; he adds, however, they could not legally be put to death, as, not having committed any overt act, they did not deserve it.¹

It was no less upon that occasion that the Signory and the Seventy, by order or by flattery, formally declared that whoever offended Lorenzo committed the crime of high treason, which in the opinion of more than one, writes the same Montecatino, injured more than served him; "for the more he affects domination, the more enemies he makes."² He did not fear those enemies. His apologists mention other conspiracies, in which, as usual, Girolamo Riario was given a part;³ but so little is said about them, and they have left so slight traces in history at a time when suspects were hanged, that it is very difficult to regard as serious such stories as were probably invented to justify persistent severities.

Since everybody could be threatened, every citizen who had not succeeded in being considered a friend was full of anxiety, and together with anxiety reigned uneasiness, the causes of which were Lorenzo's impotence and incapacity to improve the financial situation. In spite of his foreign relations, he did not obtain from his allies a favourable treatment for Florentine traffic. Even in France, where this traffic was supposed to enjoy real immunities, its condition was precarious, and depended upon caprice and the circumstances of the hour. The result was that unexpected duties were frequently imposed

¹ "Non poteano de jure morire, perchè non essendo venuti ad altro atto estrinseco, non meritavano la morte" (Ant. Montecatino to Ercole, June 9; *Atti e mem.*, i. 255).

² "E così dichiararono espresse che chi offende Lorenzo ed offenderà commetterà crimen læsæ majestatis, che pure tribuisce onore e riguardo a Lorenzo, quantunque sia che dica che questo più presto gli nuoce, perchè quanto più se le fa atto di dominare li altri, tanti più inimici si fa" (*ibid.*).

³ Nic. Valori, *Vita Laur.*, p. 60, and after him Ammirato, xxv. 148, speak of a conspiracy of a certain Baldinotti of Pistoia, in which Girolamo Riario is said to have taken part.

upon Florentine cloth.¹ On one occasion Florentine vessels were captured by the French marine.² If trade was kept in such perpetual alarms by friends, what could be expected from the indifferent or from enemies ?

Internally the effects of the bad direction of finances were keenly felt. During the war the *monte* was obliged to suspend payment of interest. This was excused in the preamble of the decree which instituted the order of the Seventy upon the ground of the plague, and the expenses it had caused. Ought it not to have been charged upon a war undertaken by Lorenzo less for the Republic than for himself ?³ There was no other remedy for the evil than expedients that remedied nothing ; such as terminating the sale of the goods of the *Parte Guelfa* and of the office of the Tower, and collecting the debts in arrear of the debtors of the commune, although they had made arrangements with the officers of the *monte*, the violation of which was an injustice.⁴

But how could Lorenzo have managed public finances with success when he managed his own so badly ? The former, besides, served him to repair the damage made in the latter. His apologists have asserted that he had a horror of trade,⁵ and upon their testimony Machiavelli does not hesitate to affirm that he had not continued his business. This is an error, as proved by documents. In 1489 he was still engaged in commerce.⁶ He remained associated with Francesco Sacchetti and other merchants established in Lyons. The director of the bank in this town was Leonatto de' Rossi, married to a natural sister of Lorenzo.⁷ Only, with a nobleman's carelessness, he left full

¹ Despatch of December 27, 1483, analysed in Desjardins, i. 204, 205.

² 1485. Despatch analysed in Desjardins, i. 205. Capture of the two vessels belonging to the merchant Bartolommeo Frescobaldi.

³ See a fragment of the text in Capponi, ii. 145, n. 1.

⁴ Alam. Rinuccini, p. 135, 137.

⁵ "Mercaturam exhorruit" (Nic. Valori, *Vita Laur.*, p. 38).

⁶ See in *Atti e mem.*, i. 315, append., a despatch signed B. Des. al banco de' Medici Florentie.

⁷ *Documenti di Storia Italiana*, copied by Giuseppe Molini, Florence, 1836, vol. i. p. 13-16, and cited by Cappelli ; *Atti e mem.*, i. 316, append.

power to his agents, and as they were in no fear of unexpected visits of inspection and supervision from their chief, they neglected in turn the interests confided to their care, and even compromised them by their extravagance, luxury, and pleasures. At Bruges, Tommaso Portinari, with a deficit of more than a hundred thousand ducats, came very near causing the Medici bank, which was already compromised by other branches, to fail.¹ If, as Capponi believes,² the firm of Bernardo Cambi and Antonio des Rabatta at Bruges was independent, it did not compromise the capital of third parties, especially Lorenzo's,³ when it was almost reduced to bankruptcy by the loan to Marie of Burgundy, the Emperor Maxmilian's wife, of sums that were never repaid.⁴

Hence for Lorenzo the necessity of leaving no stone unturned ; all the more so as he neither wished to suppress nor suspend his vast projects of ambition. He borrowed from his friends and relations. In 1478, his cousins, the sons of Pier Francesco de' Medicis, lent him sixty thousand ducats, and received as security his villa of Cafaggiuolo and his possessions in the Mugello.⁵ The worst was that he covered the deficit in his private fortune by operations in which public officers were his accomplices and abettors. He seized the taxes, the capital of the *Monte*—in a word, he cooked the accounts of the State. When, in the month of December 1479, Tommaso Soderini, "a detestable citizen, an old screw, a wicked tyrant," being Gonfalonier of justice, repealed a tax in order to relieve the governors,⁶ he was only an instrument. Niccolò Valori, chief panegyrist, confesses himself that his hero dipped into the public

¹ "Riparare a Bruggia alla sua ragione, la quale ghovernava Thomaxo Portinari, che v'andò più di fior. 100 m. tra quivi e altre ragioni, perchè bisognava si schoprissino falliti" (Cambi, *Del.*, xxi. 2).

² *Stor. di Fir.*, ii. 145, n. 3.

³ See letter from Antonio Pucci to Lorenzo, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 212, and Cambi, *Del.*, xxi. 2.

⁴ Al. Rinuccini, p. 136.

⁵ Letter of Ant. Pucci to Lorenzo, in Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 212 ; G. Cambi, *Del.*, xxi. 2 ; Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir.*, c. ix. vol. iii. p. 87.

⁶ Al. Rinuccini, p. 131.

treasury.¹ Lorenzo suppressed the pious foundations established by the Republic and a great number of families.² He had the soldiers paid by the Bartolini bank, in which he had an interest, but upon the pay he retained 8 per cent. Can it be wondered at that the *condottieri*, who also knew how to count, only served him for his money's worth, and all these abuses, these prevarications, this squandering did not profit him? In 1484, to escape bankruptcy, he was constrained to borrow four thousand ducats from Lodovico il Moro, and in order to have four thousand more he sold the house he possessed in Milan, a gift of Francesco Sforza to Cosimo.³

Thus it was that Lorenzo to a great extent was the cause of the troubles of the *monte* and of his country. As Sismondi has said,⁴ to avoid private bankruptcy he provoked public bankruptcy. What he did himself he could not, or would not, prevent his friends from doing also. He allowed them to rob the commune of those funds which came from the blood and the bones of the poor citizens.⁵ The accusations with which his instruments were charged included himself, and, at times, the numerous agents whom he maintained in the various markets of Europe.⁶ Florence was wrong, which is no novelty in this world, in confiding the management of her finances to one who did not know how to manage his own, and Lorenzo mixed up everything, designedly perhaps as much as through incompetence. To compromise the public funds and involve private fortunes is often a means of security against revolutions.

With a master in debt and financiers as little talented as honest, the art of finance can only be confined to the creation of resources by multiplying taxation or by changing its system, with the one single reserve, usually practised by popular

¹ "Fuit necesse ejus quoque rationibus ne fides deficeret, ex ærario publico providere" (Nic. Valori, *Vita Laur.*, p. 38).

² Sismondi (vii. 276) gives the figures too doubtfully for us to reproduce.

³ Al. Rinuccini, p. 147; Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir.*, c. ix., *Op. ined.*, vol. iii. p. 87, 88.

⁴ Sismondi, vii. 276.

⁵ Guicciardini, *Del Reggim. di Fir.*, l. i., *Op. ined.*, ii. 43.

⁶ Cappon, ii. 146.

governments of sparing the people, and this reserve was only theoretic. One of the chancellors or numerous notaries dependent upon the Medici, whom they maintained in the *monte* and the commune to serve their financial ends, Piero Cennini, wrote the following note after the minutes of a project of taxation: "Whoever you may be, from the moment that you are rich and make large sums, you are not a friend of the poor, though you may pretend to be. As you have few sons, you condemn, you spurn the *catasto*; you impose a heavy burden upon the wretched."¹

If the *catasto* were preserved, it was only in appearance. It made taxation proportional, while it should have been progressive—or rather, progressive taxation existed already. The Medici always had a taste for this system, which permitted them to favour their partisans, oppress their enemies, and appear well-disposed towards the lower class.² On May 18, 1480, it was established under the name of *scala*, a poll-tax, for seven years, but levied only upon the income.³ There were three classes taxed. The first comprised those whose income was from 1 to 50 florins, they were taxed 5 per cent.; the third, incomes from 1200 florins upwards, these were taxed at 16½ per cent. But in no case might this taxation exceed the tenth of the revenue.⁴

Unfortunately these decisions are never stable. A few months later, on January 31, 1481, the tax upon the third class was raised to 22 per cent. The latitude allowed to the assessors was limited by the fiscal exigencies, for it was settled that the *scala* should produce a tenth of the whole revenue, or at

¹ "Quisquis es, quia dives es, et plurimum lucraris, non es amicus pauperum, tametsi simulas amicissimum; quoniam vero paucos filios habes, catastum damnas atque explodis, et cervicibus inopum grave onus imponis" (Text in Canestrini, p. 228). To understand the part of the phrase as to the small number of children, we must remember that 200 florins of the capital liable to taxation was withdrawn for every child a citizen had. Even then the wealthy seem to have been the reverse of prolific.

² Capponi, ii. 144; Reumont, ii. 239 *sq.*; Cipolla, p. 610.

³ See on the *scala* under Cosimo, *supra*, chap. i. p. 59.

⁴ Canestrini, p. 232-233, which gives the sources.

least twenty-five thousand florins. This was called the *decima scalata* or a *scala*.¹ The poll-tax was equally progressive, and followed the same progression. Whoever paid 7 per cent. upon his income, paid 1 florin 4 half-pence, $\frac{4}{5}$ in the poll-tax.² The poll-tax for those who paid 22 per cent. upon their income was 4 florins 4 halfpence, $\frac{4}{5}$.³ This *scala* lasted until 1487, not without being modified according to the need of the hour. On March 5, 1482, it was decided to gather in 150,000 ducats a year for two years, and even that what was due in a year's time could be demanded in the first six months.⁴

In the following June, as if this were not arbitrary enough, Lorenzo invented the *dispiacente sgravato*,⁵ an ingenious arrangement that left everything, or nearly everything, to the decision of the assessors. As they were free to go beyond the established *scala*, the master through them was free to favour or crush those he wished, and to hold every one in his power. This was the operation; a *dispiacente* of 1479, and a sixth *sgravato* of 1482 were combined. Of the whole, three-fifths were taken, which gave the figure of the new *dispiacente*, with right of exemption of a fourth. If the assessors thought fit to make a larger exemption for more, they had to obtain the authority of the Signory and the colleges. This *dispiacente sgravato*, joined to the *decima scalata* of 1480–81, constituted the new tax, which was paid in one of its two parts alternately

¹ Canestrini, p. 234, 235. He gives the scales from 1 to 50 florins.

² That is, one florin plus the twentieth part of a florin.

³ Canestrini, p. 235.

⁴ Filippo Sacramoro to the Duke of Milan, March 6, 1482; *Arch. Sforz.*, copies, No. 1610, f. 320.

⁵ These two words, untranslatable in French, need to be explained. The *aggravato* and the *sgravato* were the faculty that the assessors had to charge or exempt those liable for taxes. The *piacente* and the *dispiacente* were the names of the taxes when an ancient duty was renewed, or a combination of taxes already gathered was made, leaving the citizens the right to pay one rather than the other. Naturally, the least onerous was chosen, which was called *piacente*; but in certain cases a decree compelled the payment of the heavier, which for this reason was called the *dispiacente* or displeasing. See Canestrini, p. 185–187, who shows the documents, and also Leon Say, *Les Solutions Démocratiques de la Question des Impôts*, vol. i. p. 214, Paris, 1886. M. Say was helped by Canestrini to explain in Florence these financial questions, which he so well understood.

each month, and even oftener than once a month, until November 1488.

Thus, from September 1482 to November 1488, forty-four *dispiacenti* and thirty-three half-*decime scalate* were gathered in, the whole paid in money down, or in the interest of the sums that the taxpayer had in the *monte*; but as the *monte* sometimes retained these interests, or the half, the third, or the quarter, under pretext of redemption, it resulted that from 1485 to the end of 1487 there were twenty-six payments in ready money.¹

We should be much surprised if the financiers of our days regarded this arrangement as sound. But money was needed at any cost for the public expenses, which were all the greater as the political horizon broadened, and the policy was to reward or punish, and hold every one in suspense between the hope of favours to be paid for and the fear of these mobile taxes that could at any time be raised. By these means Lorenzo became more and more absolute master, and, which was more novel, he less and less feared to let it be seen. We cannot here enter into details of all the facts that prove this assertion. It will suffice to quote two, both occurring in the year 1489.

Concerning lot-drawing in the bourses, an invitation had been sent to the members of the colleges not to absent themselves. So lax were the notions of obedience, that when the hour of meeting arrived, the Gonfaloniers were not of the number for legal deliberation. The absent were sought for; they were found and brought, all but one, the sexagenarian Piero Borghini, who when found later than the rest, five miles off, sensibly remarked, that during the time spent in this hunt, the Gonfaloniers ought to have mustered and the drawing taken place. It could have taken place, but it did not; they were bent upon waiting for the late-comer. After a fresh message, Borghini came at last, late in the evening, in boots and a black hood. The names of the new Signory were drawn.

¹ Canestrini, pp. 241, 242.

But the departing Signory, who presided at the operation, did not pardon the person who had checked it. Neri Cambi, Gonfalonier of justice, supported by the colleges, in vain adjourned decision to the morrow; night brought no counsel. Next morning the nine beans, in other words, the unanimity of the Signory, struck Piero Borghini and three other Gonfaloniers with *ammonizione* for three years.

Lorenzo, at Pisa, learnt of this act of authority. He was shocked, as at an encroachment upon his rights. He sent his chancellor to make known his wishes; but the lords, wounded in turn, and bent on the game, refused to receive the message, or the messenger. In vain did his friends advise the master thus defied to be prudent. He insisted that Neri Cambi, the Gonfalonier of justice, should be condemned by the Seventy and the Eight of Practice to the *ammonizione* for three years in retaliation, and re-established in their office the four *ammoniti* Gonfaloniers.¹ An accurate glance showed him that he could dare everything against the one who had taken the initiative in rough treatment, and even against the one who for a moment had opposed it. Neri Cambi, "perverse and hypocritical," says a contemporary, "a prevaricator, soiled with every vice, even a nameless vice, was known for his countless nasty habits, blunders, and wickedness, so that his condemnation was a delight to the entire people."² Rinuccini, in speaking thus, although he execrated Lorenzo, traduces rather than calumniates. But where was public morality when the choice of governors, no longer drawn by lots, placed a man so abused at the head of the principal office?

② As for the other characteristic fact showing Lorenzo's purpose, we will let the orator of Ferrara speak.

"As I went towards the place there was a great uproar,

¹ G. Cambi, *Del.*, xxi. 39-47; Al. Rinuccini, p. 144. The latter even says that Neri Cambi was *ammonito* for life. Giovanni Cambi, Neri's son, and author of the chronicle we so often quote, does not mention the number of years. Cf. Ammirato, xxvi. 184.

² Al. Rinuccini, p. 144.

because a young man was being brought to justice who had killed a follower of the Eight. He had flown to Sienna, but Sienna had given him up, according to the convention. The people cried, '*Scampa! Scampa!*'¹ and even helped him to escape. The Eight in person came by the place, and ordered, under pain of death, that he be executed instantly. The orators of Milan and Genoa intervened to beg pardon. Lorenzino, Giovanni, and Pier Francesco de' Medicis likewise interceded. Lorenzo replied favourably, but, returning to the palace, he ordered the prisoner to be hanged from one of the windows of the Bargello. Then he caused four of those who cried '*Scampa!*' to be arrested. Each received four strokes of the whip, and was banished for four years. He refused to leave the place until order was completely restored."² This was how he established it for the moment and assured it for the future. He no longer wore a velvet glove upon his iron hand.³ Clemency with him is rare, and always a matter of interest.

Feeling his strength, and having proved it, the following year (1490) he went a step farther, and a marked one, toward absolute power. The Council of Seventy, his creation, was composed of his creatures. He only granted it a small share of authority; but this council, elected for life, self-renewing, and too numerous for his taste, had some right to think itself independent, and might contain doubtful friends. Lorenzo was mistrustful, and relieved it of the power of creating the Signory. This was reducing it to the position of a consulting body, which it was not necessary to consult. The precaution seemed insufficient; soon he annihilated it (August 13) by means of a *balie* of seventeen *accoppiatori*, of which he took care to be a member, to dispose of everything in the town.⁴

¹ That is, "Save yourselves."

² Ald. Guidoni to Ercole, January 19, 1489; *Atti e mem.*, i. 305.

³ Sismondi (vii. 290-291, note) enumerates thirteen acts of violence with which Lorenzo is charged, and assuredly this list is not complete.

⁴ "Che potessino disporre di tutte le cose della città" (Guicciardini *Stor. di Fir.*, c. viii. vol. iii. p. 80).

Of all the reforms accomplished by this *balie*, the financial reform alone deserves our attention: above all, Lorenzo wished to dispose of the treasury to remedy the persistent disorder in his affairs and in the affairs of his family.¹ The "Reformers," as they insisted on being called, cried down the current coin, under the pretext that they were old and blackened. They decided that they would only be accepted in the public offices at the loss of a fifth of their value, while the State would continue to give them in payment at the market price. The excises had to be paid in new silver money, in which were two ounces of silver in the pound, and which was worth a fourth more than the other.

Thus the public revenues were fraudulently augmented by a fifth, and the receipts of the town sensibly increased, but the people cried out loudly, for all the necessaries of life grew dearer. There were other complaints. In reducing the interest of the debt from 3 to $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., the *luoghi di monte* or shares were discredited. These shares of 100 crowns were sold for 27 crowns; they fell to $11\frac{1}{2}$. The money placed by fathers in the *monte delle doti* to constitute a dowry for their daughters was a daily temptation. Means were sought not to pay it when due. Three-fourths of the interest went in the payment of taxes. The rest was only payable in twenty years, at a rate, it is true, of 7 per cent. But the result of this long delay was that marriages became rare, as the aspirants demanded money down; it was all very well to mention the figure of the distant dowry, which was generally from 1100 crowns to 1500, 1800, and soon 2000. Besides, it was necessary to obtain Lorenzo's consent.²

These dishonourable practices re-established a compromised fortune. It needed yet to be protected in the future.

¹ Ammirato (xxvi. 185) says formally upon the subject: "Fu necessario rimediare a disordini della casa Medici."

² G. Cambi, *Del.*, xxi. 54; Al. Rinuccini, p. 147; Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir.*, c. viii. ix. vol. iii. p. 80 *sq.*; Machiavelli, viii. 134 A; Ammirato, xxvi. 185; Sismondi, vii. 276, 277; Capponi, ii. 158.

Lorenzo succeeded by withdrawing it as much as possible from the uncertainties of trade. A portion of it he converted into real estate. He sank the returning and appropriated capital in vast lands and houses, above all in the provinces and ruined towns, at Pisa and in its neighbourhood, for instance, where the prices were very low. To raise the value of these properties, he often resided in them, gave himself up to agriculture, and ordered the cleverest architects to build, repair, and embellish; he spent enormous sums, which his countrymen provided, without knowing it; at Pisa he rebuilt the deserted *Studio*, and transformed it into a flourishing university (1472).¹ Pisa profited by this, but he much more. For this management of his recovered wealth he showed more aptitude than for trade.

It was in reconstituting his fortune, *per fas et nefas*, that he showed himself unrivalled. All the same, he would not have succeeded without the clever use he made of his treasures. The people were grateful to him for re-establishing peace without and maintaining tranquillity within, as well as for the big profits this tranquillity brought the traders. They were still more grateful for the splendid feasts of a classical style that he gave without creating jealousy,² and the lucrative encouragement that he afforded a large number of writers, painters, and sculptors. Nobody was vexed by the display and liberality of a man who, having reached the top of the ladder, was no more a simple citizen, and every one longed for the beneficent shower, which most of all benefited him who rained it. It was at this price that he purchased the praise of those contemporaries who dictated their judgment to posterity.

Lorenzo had received a literary education. Learned masters had cultivated his youth: Gentile Becchi d'Urbino, later on Bishop of Arezzo, and an eloquent orator in many an embassy;

¹ See Fabroni, *Doc.*, p. 72-90; Ammirato, xxvi. 185.

² On the fêtes that contributed to Lorenzo's popularity see *Ricordi d'una giostra fatta a Firenze a di 7 febr.* 1481, MS. of the Magliab., published by Fanfani in *Il Borghini*, vol. ii. p. 473-483, 530-542, Florence, 1869.

Cristoforo Landino, the celebrated scholar; Marsilio Ficino, a priest and creature of the family, who opposed Platonism to the reigning Scholasticism, and sought to reconcile it with the doctrines of the Church.¹ He also received lessons and help from other remarkable men who passed through Florence or spent a little time there: Demetrius Chalcondyle, Guidantonio Vespucci, Bartolommeo de la Scala. So many teachers naturally made him a singular mixture of contraries. He professed certain religious opinions that may be called principles,² and he also wrote sacred poems; but by temperament and a natural gaiety inclined to pleasure,³ he also wrote profane and licentious verses. We have seen how business wearied him, because it drew him away from pleasure.⁴ Even in ripe age he took an interest in the amusements of his children. He delighted in nonsense, and only liked the society of facetious and sarcastic men.⁵ To please him, serious matters must be treated lightly. His house was as much devoted to immoral purposes as to art and learning.

¹ Ficino published in 1482 a Latin translation of Plato, for which Filippo Valori paid. See Cipolla, p. 662; Capponi, notes to the documents at the end of J. Pitti, *Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., i. 318; Leop. Galeotti, *Della Vita e degli Studi di Marsilio Ficino* (*Arch. Stor.*, new ser., vol. ix. part ii. p. 27-91). On p. 37 we are shown that he entered the Medici family at eighteen.

² See details and proofs furnished by Cipolla, p. 662.

³ There is no doubt on this point: "Fu libidinoso e tutto venereo e costante negli amori suoi che duravano parecchi anni, la qual cosa, a giudizio di molti, gli indebolì tanto il corpo, che lo fece morire, si può dire, giovine" (Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir.*, c. ix. vol. iii. p. 88); Machiavelli (viii. 34 B) speaks of the "vizi che maculassero tante sue virtù (!), ancora che fusse nelle cose veneree maravigliosamente involto." Alessandra Macinghi speaks of his youthful intrigues with married women (Letters 44, 45, 46, 68, and Ces. Guasti's notes). Two years later (September 26, 1467), his tutor, Becchi, warns him "che in re venerea tu havessi riguardo . . . t'importa la vita." See this letter in Buser, *Lorenzo il Magnifico als italienischer Staatsmann*, Leipzig, 1879. In this work there are many other proofs of the lax lives of Lorenzo and his brother. Married, he was no steadier. Francesco Nacci announced to him from Naples the coming of fifty beautiful slaves (December 24, 1482, in Buser, *ibid.*). Perhaps they were servants, it has been suggested. Possibly, but something more too.

⁴ See preceding chapter, p. 374, n. 7.

⁵ "Ancora . . . che si dilettaſſe d'uomini faceti e mordaci, e di giuochi puerili più che a tanto uomo non pareva si convenisse, in modo che molte volte fu visto intra i suoi figliuoli, tra i loro trastulli mescolarsi" (Machiavelli, viii. 134 B).

A modern historian who is not an enemy, draws the following picture of his complex life. Having passed a law for the destruction of any vestige of liberty that remained, and pronounced confiscations or sentences of capital punishment,¹ he would enter the Platonic Academy, discuss virtue and the immortality of the soul, mix with fast youths, sing and compose carnival songs, give himself up to women and wine, frequent feasts where verses were recited and poetry discussed, and each of these occupations into which he plunged seemed to be the sole object of his life. The most singular of all is that in the entire course of this existence we cannot quote a single act of true generosity or honesty towards his people, his followers, or even his relations. If there were one, his indefatigable panegyrists would not have forgotten it. His was an evil nature, and he lived in a very evil time.²

In the following chapter we shall see that he had a sincere taste for art and letters for their own sake, rather than for love of the men of letters whom he feebly protected; but we may not doubt that satisfaction of this taste was calculated in his policy; he well knew that in leading minds in this direction, he turned them from affairs of state, and that in amusing as

¹ See in Guicciardini, *Del Reggim. di Fir.*, *Op. ined.*, vol. ii. p. 43, the names of his victims. Mark that Guicciardini, always cold, never shows any strong feeling against Lorenzo.

² Villari, i. 45, 46. Among the number of Lorenzo's panegyrists, we are surprised to find one of our most competent contemporaries, M. Agenore Gelli, in a speech delivered at the Dante Lyceum, and already quoted. It is one-sided, but the notes are useful. We only find a trace of kindly feeling in Lorenzo towards his mother at her death (Lorenzo's letters to the Duke and Duchess of Ferrara, March 25, 1482; *Atti e mem.*, i. 244); towards his old tutor, Gentile Becchi, whom he recommended to the Duchess, but in his own interest, for Gentile had become one of his principal agents (April 23, 1487, *ibid.*, p. 247); towards his children, if it be a proof of fatherly tenderness to express a wish that his daughter should be comfortably off (Lorenzo to Lanfredini, in the preface to the letter of Ser Matteo Franco, published by M. Isid. del Lungo in the *Arch. Stor.*, 3rd ser., vol. ix. part i. p. 35). Cf. Letters of Poliziano in the *Prose volgari inedite*, published by M. Del Lungo, Florence, 1867. M. Dantier (ii. 200) quotes, and many fine words written by Lorenzo can be quoted. See chiefly the letter to his son the Cardinal, instructions to Piero (in Fabroni), and a letter to Poliziano: "Si feræ partus suos," &c., also in Fabroni, p. 166. But the most perverse princes are often capable of excellent advice.

well as corrupting Florence, he strengthened his rule. Surrounded by so much brilliancy, men found the yoke easier to bear.

There were, however, some who demurred; the spirit of opposition is never quite silenced. It was a "foreigner" who, towards the end of Lorenzo's life, represented this spirit in the name, it is true, of a general principle which knows neither walls nor frontiers—the Christian principle. A Dominican monk, he was of Paduan origin, and born at Ferrara, September 21, 1442, whither the generosity of Niccolò III. of Este had tempted his father, a renowned doctor. He was called Hieronymo or Girolamo Savonarola.¹

Of a vigorous and independent mind, he had resisted the Pagan current, and even the Classical current, because he saw that the one determined the other. In 1475 he entered the convent of the Preaching Friars at Bologna, and he wrote to his parents, in despair of his resolution, "that he could not endure the great wickedness of the blind people of Italy."² Of too warlike a nature to turn away simply from the things

¹ See the genealogical tree of Savonarola, very carefully traced by M. Cittadella, in the *Nuovi Documenti e Studi intorno a Girolamo Savonarola*, gathered by P. Bayonne, and published by M. Al. Gherardi, Florence, 1876. On Savonarola see our *Jérôme Savonarola, sa Vie, ses Prédications, ses Ecrits*, Paris, 1853, 1st ed., 2nd vol. (the two following editions are abridged); P. Villari, *La Storia di Girolamo Savonarola e de' suoi Tempi*, Florence, 1861 (new edit. in 1887). Much has since been written about Savonarola. See, among others, Rev. William R. Clarke, *Savonarola and his Life and Times*, London, 1878; P. Ceslas Bayonne, *Étude sur Jérôme Savonarole*, Paris, 1879, works without criticism; Ranke, *Savonarola und die florentinische Republik gegen Ende des fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts in Historisch-biografische Studien*, Leipzig, 1877; Glaser, *Savonarola*, Leipzig, 1882, &c. M. Cittadella has published a biographical bibliography of Savonarola, which contains no less than 119 articles. To be accurate, it comprises the works of imagination and the letters of Savonarola.

² See this letter in his own lesson, Villari, vol. ii., documents, No. 1, p. 3 sq. It has already been often published, chiefly by Burlamacchi, *La Vita del P. Gir. Sav.*, ed. of Venice, 1829, work published first in vol. i. of Baluze's *Miscellanies*. We have translated and published this letter (see our vol. *Jér. Sav.*, i. 7) after Burlamacchi's text. It is not useless to say here that the authenticity of Burlamacchi's work is disputed by recent writers—Palermo, Ranke, &c.; but it matters little regarding this letter whose autograph has been found in the Gondi Palace of Florence by Count Carlo Capponi, and published in his short treatise, *Alcune Lettere di Fra. Gir. Sav.* In addition, upon the authenticity and value of the old biographies of Savonarola, doubted by Ranke, see M. Villari's memoir in

he blamed, he faced them, and made war upon the invading Paganism, which, in his opinion, was the cause of the general depravation. Did he not see in Bologna, the town where he lived, a celebrated professor, Antonio Urceo, making a display of his incredulity, and still more, of his contempt of faith? ¹ Savonarola was then upon a mission at Ferrara; but he would not stay there, for, as he afterwards wrote, he well knew that no man is a prophet in his own country. ² Chance favoured his wish. At the time when at Ferrara an assault was feared from the Venetians, and the massacre of the inhabitants was threatened, the Dominicans who resided there, or happened to be there, were dispersed over the allied towns, and Savonarola was sent to Florence. This decided his future. ³

At Florence, in 1483, in the Church of San Lorenzo, he preached as he had preached elsewhere. ⁴ But his speech was rough, unadorned, and harsh. His style was heavy, his voice weak, and his intonation false, while he lacked clearness of expression. Therefore hardly twenty-five persons heard his sermons. ⁵ How could he have pleased this race of frivolous and elegant Athenians? He fell back on himself, and had ample time to nurse his dreams at a period when all heads were more or less turned. ⁶

No. 1 of the *Rivista Storica Italiana*, in which the illustrious historian's doubts are attacked by solid arguments. This discussion is also to be found in the preface of the new edition to his *Savonarola*, given in 1887 by M. Villari. It is certain that the work attributed to Burlamacchi cannot be his; but for want of another, his name is given to a work whose historical value has resisted all hostile criticism.

¹ Carlo Malagola, *Della Vita e delle Opere di Antonio Urceo, detto Cordo*, Bologna, 1878, p. 186 sq., quoted by Cipolla, p. 666.

² See letter to his mother, January 25, 1490, in the collection of P. Marchese, *Lettere Inedite*, p. 40. We have given the translation in *Jér. Sav.*, i. 14, n. 1.

³ Burlamacchi, p. 38.

⁴ P. Bayonne says that it was in 1484, but without proofs to support a statement contrary to that of other writers. See A. Gherardi on the date of Savonarola's first arrival in Florence; *Nuovi Documenti e Studio intorno a Gir. Sav.*, p. 45, Florence, 1878.

⁵ Burlamacchi, p. 38; Rastrelli, *Vita del P. Gir. Sav.*, c. ii., Geneva, 1781. Savonarola himself recognised his defects as an orator in his *De Veritate Prophetica*, c. vi. The text is in our *Jér. Sav.*, i. 42, note.

⁶ See Tommasini, *La Vita e gli Scritti di N. Machiavelli*, i. 106, Turin, 1883.

In the convent of San Giorgio d'Oltrarno, where his Order had been established since 1435, he believed that a plague threatened the Church, for eight reasons.¹ The clergy, when things are not to their liking, have the habit of predicting cataclysms. The prophecy of a coming plague was an ordinary resource for pulpits and convents at the end of this corrupt century.² Later on, Savonarola went further; leaving the hackneyed path, he prophesied Lorenzo's death from an incurable disease,³ and Innocent VIII.'s and Ferrante's at an advanced age.⁴ By this means he passed for a prophet in earnest. As his honest life was known, he inspired more confidence than the other preachers of a Church where corruption reigned no less than among the laity.⁵ If, sceptical and mocking, Florence turned a deaf ear to him, it was not so with the other towns; they were carried away by his ardent sincerity,⁶ which was explained by the visions of his contemplative life and his ascetic's cell. He believed that Heaven ordered him to announce the plagues that he foresaw. But even in Florence a few choice minds divined the fruit under a rough bark. Pico de la Mirandola said he could not live without him,⁷ and pressed Lorenzo to recall him and fix him in the Dominican convent of San Marco, quite close to the Medici palace.

Lorenzo hesitated. Doubtless he remembered the annoyances that in 1487 the Franciscan Bernardino of Feltre had caused him, whose Lenten sermons in the Duomo had set a

¹ Edition of his first process, published by Villari, vol. ii. ; *Doc.*, p. 251. Savonarola himself made this declaration.

² See P. Marchese, *Scritti vari. San Marco di Firenze*, l. ii. p. 114.

³ Poliziano, letter to Jacopo Antiquario, May 18, 1492, in Roscoe, vol. ii., append. n. 72.

⁴ See in Villari indication of sources, i. 139, 140. In the index of our first edition will be found all of Savonarola's predictions at the word *prédications*, and for that in question here, vol. i. p. 48, 55, 60 of the same work, *Jérôme Savonarole*, &c.

⁵ P. Marchese (*ibid.*, p. 115) recognises it, though shading off the tints for state reasons.

⁶ P. Marchese, p. 120, 123; our *Jér. Sav.*, c. ii. vol. i. p. 21, 34.

⁷ Burlamacchi, p. 39.

match to the hatred of the Jews, who were perhaps only saved from massacre by the intervention of the Eight. The incendiary preacher had been dismissed, which had greatly annoyed the people.¹ Others, even beggars, prophesied at random.² But these memories were not lasting. Lorenzo yielded to oft-repeated prayers,³ and easily obtained Savonarola's change to Florence from his Lombard superiors. The prophet returned thither in June 1490.⁴

In announcing his prophecies at San Gemignano, at Reggio, Genoa, Brescia, he had already expressed his thought with clearness. He wished to reform morals by faith, to reform the clergy by himself, and the faithful by the clergy. He summed up his argument in three propositions: The Church of God would be reformed; Italy would be thrashed; both events would happen shortly. In consequence, he was called, and not without reason, the preacher of the dissatisfied or despairing.⁵ He represented those moral and religious interests that Lorenzo did not understand or to which he was indifferent. The Platonic philosophy, the only religion of the upper class, remained a closed book for the majority; the people, turned by example and advice from the old beliefs, were left anchorless. Plunged into the void, shaken in their hopes of a hereafter, they were like an army without a head and eager for one, ready in any case to follow a man full of enthusiasm and energy, more anxious to strike boldly than to insinuate cleverly. Savonarola was such a man. His speech, always

¹ Luca Landucci, *Diario*, p. 53.

² See Tommasini, i. 106, 107.

³ M. Al. Gherardi (*Nuovi Documenti e Studi*, &c., p. 251-253) proves that Pico cannot have made this proposition to Lorenzo before 1488 or 1489. There was perhaps an interval of a year or two between the proposal to Savonarola and his return. Cf. on this disputed question our *Jér. Sav.*, i. 37, 38, 52, and Villari, i. 81, n. 2. M. Gherardi has the last word on this subject. However, M. Ant. Cosci, in a work on this important publication (*Arch. Stor.*, 4th ser., 1879, vol. iv. p. 285), seems to believe little in this regard.

⁴ Marchese, p. 124, 125, 129; our *Jér. Sav.*, i. 34. Cf. Al. Gherardi, p. 249.

⁵ Jacopo Nardi, speech delivered in Venice in 1534 in Villari, vol. ii.; *Doc.*, p. 59.

simple and rather coarse, was fit to touch an ignorant crowd not made fastidious by the study of antiquity.¹

Seeing in himself the future reformer, and living at Florence, he necessarily regarded this town as the predestined centre of reformation. Without any hope of gaining the dissolute Lorenzo, he could not help loathing in him one of the principal causes of evil. Let us make no mistake. It was the obstacle to his projects that irritated him, not, as his biographers say, the rule of a city, once free, by a usurper, son and grandson of usurpers.² But fear restrained his language, and prevented him from coming to an open quarrel. He contented himself with preaching the reform of morals by means of parables, after Scripture,³ without proclaiming himself inspired by God.⁴ Prophet of the probable, if he foresaw a revolution, it was because he saw the Medici drained, their disagreements, and the aversion that they inspired. If he announced the invasion of Charles VIII., it was because the preparations were being openly made.⁵ He waited for Lorenzo's death to predict that the reform would spread from Florence throughout Italy, and thence to the East.⁶ Until then he only dared utter these words: "God's will is that Florence be governed by the people, and not by tyrants."⁷

It was torture for one of his fiery temper to restrain him-

¹ Cerretani and Guicciardini admired Savonarola's eloquence, and deemed it novel; doubtless because they knew little of the Middle Ages and its allegorical mania. They also called it "natural." This is truer. The orator lived in the trash of the Middle Ages like a fish in water.

² See P. Barsanti, *Della Storia del P. Gir. Sav.*, l. i. c. xxii. p. 26, n. 3, Leghorn, 1782.

³ See text in our *Jér. Sav.*, i. 44. In the same work (p. 51, n. 2) may be found a striking proof of the little importance the question of usurpation of the Republic had for Savonarola. It is a most submissive letter to Piero, Lorenzo's son, now master, and whom he hoped to use.

⁴ See Cipolla, p. 668, and n. 4, and Cerretani in Ranke, *Historische Biographische Studien: Savonarola und die florentinische Republik*, p. 336.

⁵ *Terza predica sopra i Salmi*, January 13, 1495, Venice, 1517, f. 12 r°. Text in our *Jér. Sav.*, vol. i. p. 48, n. 3.

⁶ *Prediche sopra Aggeo*, predica 18, p. 132 r°, 138 v°, 140 r°, Venice, 1514.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 140 r°. Compare the following *prediche*, which are a continual appeal to emancipation. See also Marchese, p. 130; Cipolla, p. 667 n.

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self thus; but what was restraint to him must have appeared audacity to Lorenzo and his courtiers. More or less disguised, the threats were intelligible, and this seditious preacher might in turn be threatened. This was why, in 1491, to protect him and show that they shared his views, his brothers of San Marco chose him for their superior.¹

This, of course, gave him fresh strength, which emboldened him. Already, despite the persistent defects of his eloquence, he became the fashion; he owed this to the novel, inflamed, and prophetic turn of his preaching. From the convent garden, which was at first his narrow theatre, he entered the vaster church (August 1, 1490), and then the following Lent, the immense cathedral. Much more striking was the ill-will he so openly showed Lorenzo. He refused to follow the custom of waiting upon him in his house, and even refused to come down from his cell when the master came to the convent.² He did not reject the presents which that liberal ruler made the Dominican community, but from the pulpit he declared himself exempt from gratitude. "The good watchdog," he said, "always barks to defend his master's house. If the robber, to soothe him, flings him a bone or anything else, the good watchdog continues to bark and to bite the robber."³

In despair of conciliating this barbarian, and, as a biographer of the latter says, "of finding a spot on which to plant the vine,"⁴ Lorenzo decided to counteract the poison of an envenomed tongue by another poison. He thrust into the pulpit an Augustinian of San Spirito, Fra Mariano of Ghinazzano, who could refuse him nothing,⁵ and whose fame was so great that he was called "God's angel on earth."⁶

¹ Marchese, p. 131.

² See our *Jér. Sav.*, i. 51, 54, and Villari, i. 119, taken from other biographies.

³ These words are in the sixteenth *predica sopra Amos*, delivered March 4, 1496, consequently after Lorenzo's death (f. 78 v^o, Venice, 1519). But Burlamacchi (p. 45) says that he often repeated them, and Marchese (p. 132) affirms that they were delivered during Lorenzo's life. Cf. Villari, i. 121.

⁴ Burlamacchi, p. 46.

⁵ Lorenzo built the convent of San Gallo. See Machiavelli, viii. 134 B.

⁶ Letter of the *Consules Populi vetuste Nursei*, May 1, 1489, in Reumont, ii. 525.

Savonarola's apologists assure us that he had the best of this struggle. In any case, it had the drawback of proving to the audiences of the two rivals that the same text might plausibly be developed in contrary meanings—a disastrous lesson, since the reformer wanted to substitute a blind faith in his word, the word of God,¹ for the kindly pillow of doubt, of which Montaigne speaks.

The progress of hereditary gout, aggravated by a life of pleasure, kept Lorenzo from joining in these oratorical jousts. The disease which obliged him to stop in his travels, to seek the curative waters of some spa, to suspend his business for a while, and even postpone the reception of ambassadors,² was complicated by unforeseen accidents, the more formidable as they were little known.³ The doctors whom he sent for, or who visited him from afar, at Careggi, whence he had not stirred since 1492, treated him as a millionaire, and made him swallow solutions of precious stones, which made a hole in his purse without improving his health. Every one wondered how he bore up under such cruel sufferings.⁴ According to an old habit, they were put down to the weather and his excesses;⁵ but, in spite of transient improvements,⁶ he was regarded as

¹ See details in Marchese, p. 134; our *Jér. Sav.*, i. 57, 58; Villari, i. 122, and all the apologists, Pico, Burlamacchi, Barsanti, Razzi, &c.

² See despatches of Stéfano Taberna, dated from Ospedaletto, near Volterra, June 2, 1487; *Arch. Sforz.*, copies, No. 1610, p. 328, and MSS. letters of Lorenzo, preserved in the library of G. Capponi, indicated by himself; *Stor. di Fir.*, ii. 163. "Lorenzo si gode le sue gotte, le quali li danno da gridare in modo che ancora non vuole che veruno gli parli" (Ald. Guidoni to Ercole, December 17, 1488; *Atti e mem.*, i. 305).

³ Rinuccini (p. 146) speaks of great pains in the stomach and through the body. Poliziano of pains "iis qui quoniam viscerum cartilagini, inhæreant, ex argumento hypocondrii appellantur" (Letter to Jacopo Antiquarino, May 18, 1492, in Roscoe, vol. iii. 370, append. n. 77).

⁴ Manf. Manfredi to Ercole, February 11, 1492; *Atti e mem.*, i. 310. Niccolò Michelozzi to Piero de Lorenzo, Naples, March 22, 24, 29, 1492, in Desjardins, i. 429-432.

⁵ From the same, March 8, p. 311.

⁶ February 11, he was thought dying; on the 16th he was much better, and it was hoped he would return to affairs. March 5, relapse; the 8th, improvement; the 25th, better still; on April 5, serious relapse. These changes can be followed in Manf. Manfredi's despatches to Ercole; *Atti e mem.*, i. 310-312.

doomed.¹ On April 5 he was so ill that he could not even receive Ercole d'Este, who came from Florence, and sent his son Piero to him.² It was a fine boast of Savonarola's: "It is he who will go, and I will remain."³

When death approached, whose presage was read in every incident,⁴ Lorenzo wanted to see his enemy. He doubtless thought that a reconciliation *in extremis* with this monk of increasing authority would secure his support for Piero, the miserable heir to the power of the Medici. What passed between these two men? Did Savonarola offer the dying man peace with the Church upon unacceptable conditions? Ordinarily the Church is not so harsh to those who implore her supreme benediction. The inflexible character of the Prior of San Marco assuredly permits us to believe that he was severe, but the assertions being contradictory, we cannot decide.⁵ The probabilities even are that the dying man had

¹ "E vero che li medici non dubitano che sia infirmitas ad mortem" (The same, February 11, p. 310).

² Manfredi to Eleanor of Aragon, Ercole's wife, April 5; *ibid.*, p. 312.

³ "Io ho a stare qua e lui se ne ha andare" (22nd *Predica sopra Exodo*, March 18, 1498, f. 274 r^o, Venice, 1540). It was later, we see, that Savonarola admitted he had uttered these words, but they are not less likely than these other: "Io predissi parecchi anni innanzi la morte di Lor. de' Medici" (3rd *Predica sopra i salmi*, January 13, 1495, f. 12 r^o, Venice, 1517). Cf. our *Jér. Sav.*, i. 49, n. 3 and 56. Any one might make this prophecy; the question was to remain vague enough regarding the date not to be exposed to error.

⁴ See Valori, *Vita Laur.*, p. 67; Cambi, *Del.*, xxi. 68; Leon. Morelli, *Del.*, xix. 198; Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir.*, c. ix. vol. iii. p. 83; Ammirato, xxvi. 186.

⁵ In 1853 we thought fit to adopt Poliziano's opinion, who states that the blessing was given, and since then M. Villari (i. 155) has furnished good reasons for proving the uncertainty of this testimony. But he seems to me to go too far in giving faith to the contrary testimony: 1. He is wrong in accepting as different authorities the assertions of Savonarola's apologists; they only repeat what Savonarola said. 2. He supposes that Lorenzo could only send for the monk to confess. Now nothing proves this, Lorenzo having a serious political motive, in the interest of his son, for seeking an understanding with the monk. If it had been confession, the version unfavourable to Lorenzo could only have been known to Savonarola, who would thus have broken a professional secret. If there was no confession, everything is explained, the indiscretions committed and the blessing demanded. 3. He admits that the blessing was not given; but here again the assertions are contradictory, and how in this case explain certain words of Poliziano, "Simul demisso capite vultuque et in omnem piæ religionis imaginem formatus, subinde ad verba illius et preces rite ac memoriter responsitabat" (Letter to Jacopo Anti-

sent for him, not to make his peace with God, but to conciliate for his son the good-will of the powerful man whose ill-will he only had known, and that at the moment of parting he asked for the ordinary blessing that many miscreants desire or beg on the verge of the great unknown.

On April 8, 1492, Lorenzo died, at the age of forty-four, "after a long illness," as his son Piero wrote dryly to Ercole d'Este.¹ Although expected, the dissolution of such a great personage made a sensation. On the next night, the renowned doctor of his last hours, Pier Leoni of Spoleta, professor of Pisa, was found at the bottom of a well. He was accused of poisoning. A servant wished to kill this emissary of death, and was prevented by Piero.² However, the story of suicide seems improbable; doctors kill, but they do not kill themselves.³

King Ferrante, they say, exclaimed that Lorenzo had lived long enough for his glory, but not long enough for Italy.⁴ Even then it was understood that the son was not worth the father, that Florence would decline, and the entire peninsula

quario, quoted above). 4. Could Savonarola ask Lorenzo to give the Florentines freedom before dying? Lorenzo had no official authority, and he could not influence his son upon so grave a question. 5. Poliziano, says M. Villari, could not admit an account differing from his protector's, and thus compromise his future. But if Savonarola's version were true, would he, as Lorenzo's friend, have spoken in praise of his enemy, a sure means of compromising himself with Lorenzo's son? The question remains doubtful at least, and the proof is that since the publication of M. Villari's work, M. Dantier (ii. 202), M. Reumont (ii. 559), M. Tommasini (i. 92), far from following him, accept our hypothesis as the more probable. Also M. Cipolla (p. 669), who exposes, discusses, and indicates in a note the different opinions of the various authors, abstains from pronouncing. For details see our *Jér. Sav.*, i. 59-63; Villari, i. 136 sq., 155-158; Reumont, ii. 559.

¹ See this letter in *Atti e mem.*, i. 248. Lorenzo's last moments and death have been described by Poliziano in his letter to Jacopo Antiquario, which was published by Roscoe, iii. 370-384, append. 77. Cf. *Ex Diario Anonymi*, in Roscoe, iii. 386, append. 79; Valori, *Vita Laur.*, p. 66, 67; Reumont, ii. 551 sq.

² *Ricordanze di Tribaldo de' Rossi, Del.*, xxiii. 275.

³ "Si disse lo giptorono in un pozzo. . . Di poi chavorono bocie fuori s'era giptato per disperato" (Cambi, *Del.*, xxi. 67). Cf. *Rime di Jacopo Sannazaro nella morte di Pier Leone Medico*, in Roscoe, iii. 381, append. 78; Nic. Valori, *Vita Laur.*, p. 66; Allegretti, xxiii. 825.

⁴ Fabroni, p. 212, who does not give his authority.

would feel the absence of the great balance. The friends and men of letters who had done so much for his fame, the painters, sculptors, and architects who had obtained or sought his patronage, were dispersed, and some prematurely followed him to the grave.¹

He was buried without pomp, probably in accordance with his wishes, for he dreaded provoking envy, lest it should fall upon his son. But he received the highest honours; the entire population, forgetting his wrong-doing, his defects, and his vices, followed the funeral of him they called in this decisive hour of fame "the father and master of the town."² They rendered him the still greater homage of bringing to his son of twenty-one the respect of which he could not then, and never did, show himself worthy.

It is easy to explain the various opinions of Lorenzo. In him there were two men, we may even say four, when we remember his foreign and domestic policy, his character now frivolous and now serious. Abroad he succeeded in reconciling his country with the Holy See, and in making it feared by the too powerful potentates of Italy, the Duke of Milan and the King of Naples, between whom he kept equal³ the balance of which he often spoke.⁴ He was so successful in the game of see-saw,⁵ that the princes implored his intervention in their differences,⁶ and when once he was dead, Machiavelli declared that there was

¹ Cambi, *Del.*, xx. 67; Machiavelli, viii. 134 B. Poliziano and Pico died in 1494, though younger. Ficino, already quite old, did not long survive him.

² "Pubblico padre e padrone della città" (Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir.*, iii. 93). Reumont in the *Arch. Stor.*, 1883, vol. xii. disp. 4, has published a note on Lorenzo's burial. In 1559, Duke Cosimo had the remains of Lorenzo and of his brother Giuliano placed in the sarcophagus of Giuliano the younger in the new sacristy or depository chapel.

³ "Era venuto in tanta riputazione che e' signori di fuori, cioè el Re di Napoli, el ducha di Milano lo temevano, perchè apichandosi da una parte di questi due principi, dava di poi trachollo alla bilancia" (Cambi, *Del.*, xxi. 67).

⁴ See *Atti e mem.*, &c., vol. i. *passim*.

⁵ See the remarkable letter addressed by Lorenzo to his ambassador at the Holy See, October 22, 1487, in Desjardins, i. 214-219.

⁶ The Duke of Calabria said to Pier Vettori, the Florentine orator at Naples, "che si conosceva manifestamente per tutta Italia quanto voi (Lorenzo) potessi nel papa, e che lo amb. fior. quodam modo lo governava . . . e si credeva che se

nobody else to suppress the ambition of Lodovico il Moro.¹ His cleverness gained him the glory of the policy of equilibrium that Florence for centuries had practised in her relations with the still independent Tuscan towns, and also with the larger States with which she was surrounded when she was a State. The very misfortunes that followed his death added to his glory; the people were persuaded that he would have made that madman Charles VIII. reasonable, or at least have arrested him in his folly. He had the precious advantage of eloquent men, curious of all things, and capable of speaking well upon them; they are considered fit to lead, and the deceptions in this respect are added to the account of chance or fatality.

It was the opinion entertained of him abroad that made him so great at home.² The grocer-apothecary, Luca Landucci, reflects in his Journal the common feeling: "This man was, according to the world, the most glorious that could be found, the richest, the most exalted, and the most renowned. Every one said that he ruled Italy, and truly he was a wise man; he succeeded in everything. Not only has he made his house, but our entire town illustrious."³ Evidently oppression is pardoned to the man who offers glory.

* But as a fact the oppression cannot be denied. Lorenzo smothered in blood the factions which were dormant from the date of the great punishment of the Pazzi. He only knew two methods of conquering—cutting off heads and leaving bones to rot. Now, useless severities are odious, and the old practice of *panem et circenses* is justly loathed, neither the economist nor the moralist can approve of Lorenzo. What would it be if, as has been said, the favours he granted were at the cost of

voi facessi quello che voi potete, che le cose si assetirebbono" (Pier Vettori to Lorenzo, May 9, 1489, in Desjardins, i. 215, note).

¹ Machiavelli, viii. 134 B.

² "La riputazione del prefato M^{co} Lorenzo è la stima che ne facciano li potentati d'Italia e signori di fuorvia; che non la avendo, non sarà de la estimazione ne la terra che è" (Ant. Montecatino to Ercole, December 17, 1482; *Atti e mem.*, i. 265).

³ Luca Landucci, *Diario*, p. 65.

the public treasury, and that "when he had to open his own purse, he leaned much more upon the side of avarice than upon that of liberality?"¹ It was not his generosity that made the splendour of art; we have seen that it was anterior to his day. If the men of letters owe him more, because he was more of a *littérateur* than a collector, he did not prevent them from falling. In his time philosophy and literature degenerated into philology, erudition, and imitation. Thanks to him, the writers, yielding to his power, immoral after his example, were virtuosi, and not men or citizens.

It has been said that liberty only existed in name. We may say not even in name, for only the opposers pronounced the word, whereas in Cosimo's time the "governors" never had it out of their mouths. Such was the progress of subjection, that this hypocrisy was no longer necessary; and such that of absolute power, that if a resolution were taken without consulting him, Lorenzo insisted on its being revoked and a contrary decision adopted. A simple servant could not be replaced without his permission, and his choice must be accepted,² which brought about among the degraded citizens a contempt of public matters. Giovanni Cambi, son of one of his victims, impartial enough, however, to recognise his art as equaliser abroad,³ calls him "a haughty tyrant, worse than the Duke of Athens, who, had he lived longer, would have ruled the people with an iron hand, as was his intention."⁴

Ruled the people with an iron hand! He had already done this, and Cambi's last words are very feeble after the first. His contemporary Rinuccini, who was also an enemy, but who had no further reason, at least to such an extent, since he admitted

¹ Quello concedeva, non del suo, ma del publico, senza modo o misura alcuna . . . Dove avea a spendere di suo, più presto pendeva, e non poco, nell' avarizia che nella liberalità" (Rinuccini, p. 147).

² Al. Rinuccini, p. 147, 149.

³ See *supra*, p. 351-354.

⁴ "Diventò tiranno solo di tanta alturità che il ducha d'Atene non ebbe tanta, e se vivea più . . . si facieva signore a bacchetta, sechondo al suo disegno" (Cambi, *Del.*, xxi. 67).

that the honours due to him were not refused,¹ declares "that Lorenzo was for many years the most pernicious and cruel of tyrants;" he even accuses him of "having done more damage, and risked his country's reputation more than any other citizen for a long while."² In view of these concurrent testimonies of men who suffered under this *régime*, of what weight the subsequent panegyrics, commissioned and interested, of the flatterers of the reigning family, or the still more recent biographers, who, among so many authentic documents, have only selected those that glorified their hero?³ One of these flatterers, the historian Guicciardini, wrote, without beating about the bush: "In spite of Lorenzo's precautions, the aspect of Florence was not that of a free town, but of an enslaved one; Lorenzo was not like a private individual, but a tyrant."⁴ *

The grandfather has often been compared with the grandson. Rinuccini regards the latter as the equal of the former. On the contrary, Guicciardini prefers Cosimo, who, as clever in trade as in politics, was able to maintain and increase his private fortune while increasing the public funds; whereas Lorenzo, in ruining himself, ruined the state, and this state, upheld by Cosimo unostentatiously, was only upheld by Lorenzo with great risks, such as the conspiracy of the Pazzi and the voyage to Naples.⁵ Guicciardini writes the truth, but not the whole truth. It is just to add that Cosimo reached the summit in that fortunate hour when all things succeed, even faults; and that

¹ "Alcuni onori debitamente a me appartenenti" (Al. Rinuccini, p. 147).

² "E in somma si può conchiudere lui essere suto molti anni perniziosissimo e crudelissimo tiranno alla città nostra e a quella aver fatto danno e diminuzione di reputazione quanto facesse già è gran tempo alcuno cittadino" (Al. Rinuccini, p. 147).

³ M. Villari, one of the most recent in Italy who has written competently of these times, is very severe upon Lorenzo, and we are glad to be able to support our opinion by his. See *Niccolò Machiavelli*, Introd., vol. i., notably p. 52.

⁴ Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir.*, c. ix., *Op. ined.*, vol. iii. p. 91.

⁵ Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir.*, c. ix. vol. iii. p. 93. Capponi (ii. 161, note, and 65) points out that Guicciardini is only so severe in a work written at the age of twenty-five, and that he is more favourable at the beginning of his great history of Italy, the work of his maturity. However, the severity does not seem excessive to us, except perhaps in the part showing his preference for Cosimo.

Lorenzo only reached it when the lingering remembrances of the Albizzi era, which in the distance seemed more liberal, inspired a certain regret for liberty, a certain dislike of the government of a single person. With him began the era of difficulties, and he triumphed over the greater part of them.

Also, if he proved a much worse trader, he was infinitely more of a prince, even in his defects; for princes are allowed to manage their finances badly, and make havoc of life as well as human dignity. His vices and defects were those of his rank and his times, the rank of crowned heads, and the times when a man's word was no pledge, when cynical debauchery was the rule of life, and religion nothing but the grimace and instrument of rule, when murder became assassination, perfidy was added to cruelty, and the dagger gave place to poison. But to his natural gifts he added qualities acquired from his most remarkable contemporaries. As much, and even better than any one else, he understood and practised the complicated art of politics and diplomacy; he excelled others in command, in intellect, and in that taste for letters and arts which quickens the broad current of civilisation, of the growing civilisation which, to posterity, will ever be the best defence of this century, from many points of view so revolting.¹

¹ The two members of the Guicciardini family who, with Canestrini, have published the unedited works of their ancestor, have collected Lorenzo's letters concerning his government (not the others, which are too numerous), and announced their intention to publish them by-and-by. See note to the unedited works of Guicciardini, vol. iii. p. 85.

CHAPTER VI.

LETTERS AND ARTS UNDER LORENZO DE' MEDICIS.

Piero de' Medicis the gouty—Poetical competition (1441)—Piero protects men of letters—Lorenzo reconstitutes the University of Pisa (1472)—He retrenches the *Studio* of Florence—The examinations—The masters and readers—Filelfo recalled (1481)—Angelo Poliziano, courtier, poet, and reader—Lorenzo a *dilettante* in erudition—His followers—Representations of the ancient theatre—Progress of the Platonic Academy—Bernardo Rucellai—Pico de la Mirandola—Return to the vulgar tongue—Lorenzo a poet—The songs of carnival and festival—Luigi Pulci and the *Morgante maggiore*—Predominance of the Tuscan dialect—Decadence of art—The remains of antiquity—Lorenzo's caprices—The façade of the cathedral adjourned (1491)—Lorenzo's theories—Realism: Antonio and Piero del Pollajuolo—Andrea del Verrocchio—Cosimo Rosselli—Sandro Botticelli—Filippino Lippi—Return to progress by a return to the past: Ghirlandajo—Crisis in art: return to religious feeling (1480)—Involuntary vandalism provoked by Savonarola—His æsthetic doctrine—Art after him—Architecture arrested by Lorenzo's death—The painters whom he did not patronise: Leonardo da Vinci—Fra Bartolommeo della Porta—Lorenzo de Credi—Andrea del Sarto and Michael Angelo—Character of Florentine art—It predominates in all Italy.

It is a mistake to speak of the movement of letters and arts under the three first Medici without distinguishing between them. If their efforts had the same personal aim, there were both in the impulse and in the results obtained serious differences that should not be overlooked. The direction and tendency of letters under Lorenzo were quite other than under Cosimo, and we cannot, without an imprudent disdain of chronology, refuse to recognise that art under the grandfather completed a remarkable evolution which has no equivalent under the grandson.

As for Piero the gouty, son of one and father of the other, he held the reins for too short a time to contribute much to the impulse which is the glory of his family. But already in his youth he showed an interest in letters. In 1443 he even took the initiative in a sort of poetical competition, a

novel fact in this history. Conjointly with Leone Battista Alberti, a mathematician and a man of letters as well as an architect, he proposed a silver crown of olive leaves as a prize for the best verses on true friendship.

The particulars of this competition deserve attention. On October 18, the compositions were left sealed with certain specified notaries. On the 22nd, which fell on a Sunday, they were publicly read in the Duomo, richly decorated for the occasion, in the presence of the Signory, the ambassadors, the prelates, and the people. The apostolic secretaries of Eugene IV., then present at Florence, were named judges. The competitors were Francesco Alberti, Antonio Alli, Mariotto Davanzati, Francesco Malecarni, Benedetto d'Arezzo, Michele de Gigante, and Leonardo Dati. The latter was not allowed to read his sonnet to the end. The pronouncement had been decided upon long before, we may believe, for the judges declared that several poems were of equal merit, and awarded the crown to the very basilica in which that absurd competition had taken place.¹ As Ginguené says, "Each one played his part: Medicis proposed the prize, the poets strove for it, no doubt one of them merited it, and it was the Church that obtained it."²

But Piero rendered more substantial services to letters. He ordered Ficino to publish his translation of Plato; he added to his father's collections; he maintained the establishments founded by the latter, and, like him, accepted the dedication of new works.³ Above all, he jealously superintended the education of his two sons.⁴

Left alone, thanks to the Pazzi's dagger, Lorenzo differed from his grandfather; where Cosimo always acted from interest, he often acted from taste. Nevertheless, he too calculated when necessary; his antipathies as well as his sympathies were

¹ The fact is proved by a document which Lami published and Tiraboschi reproduced, vol. vi. part i. lib. i. c. ii. and Prezziner, i. 106.

² Ginguené, iii. 374-375.

³ Prezziner, i. 135, 136.

⁴ See preceding chapter on Lorenzo's masters, pp. 417, 418.

dictated by interest. If he disliked the *Studio* and the *Sapienza* College, it was because he found therein a remnant of the free corporations of the Middle Ages, a creation unfavourable to his family. This is clearly seen by his actions. He gave over the *Sapienza* to a manufacturer of sails *à la bolonaise*.¹ In 1471 the Grand Council brought about the nomination of five officers commissioned "to organise a handsome and worthy *Studio* in Florence, and nowhere else."² The following year everything was changed. "Seeing the complaints made to the Signory by the ambassadors of the Commune of Pisa; having seen by experience that the *Studio* could not easily be started in Florence, because of the lack of houses and the distractions of the town; seeing that no place was so convenient as Pisa, whither strangers could come by sea, and where all things necessary to life abounded" (it was forgotten that Florence had possessed all these advantages when she wanted to attract the Council to her³), the Florentine *Studio* was transferred there for five years from the 1st November, with a budget of 6000 florins.⁴ What had happened to turn the weathercock so abruptly? Lorenzo had acquired lands upon the Pisan territory, and, as we have said, he wished to increase their value.⁵

That the Florentine *Studio* was reduced is incontrovertible. Its budget was only 400 florins; the same officers presided over

¹ Gherardi, part i. p. 180; Rondoni, p. 208. Later the *Sapienza* became the stables of the horses and lions of the Grand-Dukes. To-day it is the seat of the superior Institute of Studies.

² "Abbiano autorità di provvedere all' ordine d'uno bello e degno Studio nella città di Firenze e non altrove." This proposition obtained 92 beans against 33 in the Council of the Hundred; in the Council of the People, 161 against 80; in the Council of the Commune, 103 against 48. See Gherardi, part i. p. 179; Rondoni, p. 201.

³ See *supra*, p. 43.

⁴ Gherardi, part i. p. 181; Rondoni, p. 210, 211; Prezziner, i. 138. The decree will be found in Fabroni, *Hist. Acad. Pis.*, i. 409.

⁵ See preceding chapter, p. 417. M. Rondoni does not doubt the selfish motive of this translation. He believes that Lorenzo liked the *Studio*, and only wanted to break with the traditions of the Middle Ages. Prezziner (i. 149) says the same.

the studies at Florence and at Pisa, under the superintendence of the councils, that is to say, Lorenzo.¹ Whereas the number of chairs increased in the favoured university, they diminished in that which suffered disgrace. A decree contemptuously admitted that "three or four masters of grammar, and some one to give an idea of the orators, poets, and ornaments of the Latin tongue,"² were necessary. Lorenzo suppressed scientific education, and we might add, if the witnesses agreed, that he counted on allowing, in the study of literature, only Greek, with the intention of reserving Latin for Pisa.³ What is certain is, that he emptied Florence of good readers in order to benefit Pisa. The engagements of those who taught jurisprudence, medicine, and other sciences in Florence were annulled until the opening of the new *Studio* (November 1473).⁴ Thrown out of work, many were glad to accept an asylum and salary near at hand.⁵ It is said, but not proved, that the professors of eloquence returned to their chairs a little later; but of the chairs of science there only remained that of theology, which was under the protection of the archbishopric—theology being then regarded as a science.⁶

If the injury was to a certain extent repaired, it was because Lorenzo and his family soon became its victims.

¹ Gherardi, part i. p. 181; Rondini, p. 211, 212.

² "E perchè gli è necessario avere nella città di Firenze almeno tre o quattro maestri chi insegnino grammatica e qualche uno che dia lumi degli oratori e poeti, e degli ornamenti della lingua latina a quegli cittadini che più oltre non vogliono seguitare gli studi, però si provvede: che per gli ufficiali dello Studio s'abbia non solamente a provvedere di quelli che leggino nello Studio a Pisa nelle facoltà necessarie negli studi generali e degni, ma ancora di quegli che nella città di Fir. addottrinino nel modo detto e cittadini fior. e chi nella città di Fir. abitasse" (Decree of December 19, 1472, in Fabroni, *Hist. Acad. Pis.*, i. 411, and Prezziner, i. 150).

³ See Roscoe upon this matter (ii. 96, n. 1, Fr. trans.), who indicates the texts.

⁴ "Intendendo per vigore della presente le condotte di coloro che a Firenze insegnano salariati de' denari dello Studio, essere finite a dì 1^o di novembre proximo futuro, se durassino più tempo, e più là non durino" (Decree of December 19, 1472, *loc. cit.*).

⁵ "Si portarono altrove ed alcuni di essi furono trasferiti alla nuova Università" (Prezziner, i. 151).

⁶ Prezziner, i. 151, 152.

When his son, Giovanni, the future Leo X., at the age of thirteen, wanted to obtain the *laurea* in canonical law, the Canonical College no longer existed, and it was necessary for this little lad, already too great a personage to be removed, that Rinaldo Orsini, the vicar-general of the archbishopric, should himself name two Florentine doctors to examine him in the Archbishop's palace.

With the exception of this needed innovation, all the customary rules were observed.¹ The bridge once made, many others crossed it.² Private interest on this occasion came to the assistance of sacrificed public interest; but can we recognise in this a statesman, and, if we must give him the title, a prince, celebrated amongst all others for his attainments? The freedom which he and his ended by annihilating helped to raise again, in a short-lived renaissance, the diminished *Studio*, too old and feeble to support so grave a mutilation without danger.³

Its existence was prolonged by the presence of a few of those masters who lent a certain splendour to its slow agony. To the learned and greedy Argyropoulos⁴ succeeded in 1471 Andronicus of Thessalonica, called Callisto, who was the greatest Hellenist of the times after Theodore of Gaza, and who had a large number of pupils.⁵ In 1475 Lorenzo engaged Demetrius Chalcondyle, whose salary, soon increased, commenced at 168 florins.⁶ Cristo-

¹ Prezziner, i. 166.

² Prezziner says (i. 173) that in 1475 Fra Aless. Balducci, conventual friar, and afterwards others, obtained the theological *laurea*. From 1473 to 1492 more than fifty persons went back to the theological college of Florence.

³ M. Rondini (p. 218) pretends that Florence was too important a centre for the *Studio* to flourish there. He forgets that the University of Paris was for a long time, and is still perhaps, the first in Europe.

⁴ See *Angeli Politiani Miscellaneorum Centuria Una*; Bale, undated, in 8°; Hody, p. 202, text reported in Roscoe, ii. 99, note. It is true that our authority upon Argyropoulos's vices is Paul Jove (*Elogia Doctorum Virorum*, No. xxvii. p. 60, Antwerp, 1557), and Paul Jove, Roscoe recognises, is too vindictive to be accepted upon his own word. See Roscoe, ii. 99, and Hody, p. 198.

⁵ Raffaello Maffei of Volterra, *Comm. Urban.*, l. xxi.; Prezziner, i. 137.

⁶ Chalcondyle remained long in Florence. He was still there in 1488, but in 1492 we find him at Milan. See Fabroni, *Hist. Acad. Pis.*, i. 163; Prezziner, i. 152, 154.

foro Landino, who had contributed to forming Lorenzo's youth, translated Pliny, expounded Horace and Virgil, Dante and Petrarch, already regarded as ancients,¹ and thus helped to restore to honour the vulgar tongue, disdained through a fanatic admiration of Latin, and prepared the desirable reaction at the end of the century, of which we shall speak later.

It appears that, in spite of the fatal blow struck at the *Studio* by a hand so sure, the learned men preferred a sojourn in Florence to Pisa, since in 1478, after the Pazzi conspiracy, we find the whimsical Filelfo renewing already ancient steps to get back his post of reader.² While congratulating Lorenzo upon having escaped from the hands of the assassins, he reminded him that Cosimo, his enemy, had intended to recall him.³ Having suffered much, he wanted to give up his chair at Rome and leave that city, where the plague reigned.⁴ "I would be as useful to you at Florence as the small number of your friends. I am yours in soul and body."⁵ You know well that in my line nobody can be compared with me."⁶ Lorenzo took the matter in good part. He could not retain more rancour than his grandfather, and he no longer feared a bilious old man of eighty-four. He appointed him to the chair

¹ The first Florentine edition of Dante appeared in 1481, with commentary of Landino. See Cipolla, p. 662; Capponi, notes to the documents at the end of J. Pitti (*Arch. Stor.*, 1st ser., i. 318). The *Lettere di Luigi Pulci a Lorenzo il Magnifico e ad altri* may be seen, published by Salvatore Bongi, Lucca, 1867. They are calculated to show us the literary development of the times, and the part taken in it by the Medici.

² "Quanto sia stato el dispiacere ho ricevuto del vostro acerbissimo caso, per due altre mie lettere ho havete potuto comprendere" (Filelfo to Lorenzo, Milan, May 20, 1478; text in Fabroni, *Laurentii Vita, Doc.*, p. 102).

³ See above, chapter on letters and arts in the time of Cosimo, p. 191.

⁴ Elsewhere may be found the vicissitudes of Filelfo, his three marriages, his twenty-four children, his poverty in Milan under Galeaz-Maria, who did not patronise him like Francesco Sforza, his installation in Rome, where Sixtus IV. gave him a chair of moral philosophy. See chiefly Rosmini, *Vita di Filelfo*.

⁵ "Ben ve avviso che io ve sarei così utile in Firenze quanto pochi amici voi habiate. Io ve ho dedicato el corpo e l'animo" (Filelfo to Lorenzo, Milan, May 20, 1478; text in Fabroni, *Laur. Vita, Doc.*, p. 103).

⁶ "Voi sapete che in questa etate niun altro se po mettere a comparatione mecho in la mia facholtà" (Letter quoted by Prezziner, i. 156).

of rhetoric and philosophy in Florence, with a salary of 500 florins, much more than Landino, a constant friend, had obtained. Filelfo began his course of lessons again, but it was a sort of swan's song. It was easy to foresee his approaching death,¹ and Lorenzo did not lose much in offering him a golden bridge.

It was not this aged man of learning who reflected glory upon the feeble *Studio* of Florence, but Landino, Chalcondyle, Bartolommeo Fonte, already celebrated, though to-day obscure,² and above all, Angelo Ambrogini of Montepulciano, who, according to the fashion of the day, called himself Poliziano, after his native town (1454-94). An erudite philologist and philosopher of Ficino's school, he was more of a poet than any of his contemporaries, and made his name by poetry. He secured it by a harmonious poem in the vulgar tongue, in which he celebrated Giuliano's victory in a tournament in 1475, and which he dedicated to the survivor of the two brothers.³ Before the poem was finished the author became Lorenzo's secretary and librarian, the tutor of his children, and was lodged in the palace free of all cost. The end achieved, he renounced the idea of finishing the work.⁴ His

¹ Filelfo was reinstalled in his chair July 15, 1481. He died on the 31st. See Prezziner, i. 157.

² Verino has written these mediocre lines on Fonte:—

"Fontius est rhetor, pubis moderator hetruscae,
Judicio et nulli morum probitate secundus."

—(*De Illustribus Florentinis*, l. ii., in Prezziner, i. 164).

³ It is the poem known as the *Stanze*. It concerns a joust that took place at Florence in 1475, and which must not be confused with that of 1469, in which Lorenzo was conqueror, and was described by one of the brothers Pulci. Giuliano was conqueror in the second. See Em. Giudici, i. 445; Isidoro del Lungo, *Uno Scolare dello Studio Fiorentino* (*Nuova Antologia*, vol. x. p. 215, ann. 1869); *La Patria e gli antenati di Angelo Poliziano* (*Arch. Stor.*, 3rd ser., vol. xi. p. 9); Villari, *Nic. Mach.*, i. 206.

⁴ With much naïvete Sismondi (*De la Litt. du Midi*, ii. 44) pretends that Poliziano left aside his poem because he felt the unworthiness of his hero. Doubtless, as this hero, being Giuliano, the conqueror in the second tournament, and dead, could no longer bestow favours. See Reumont, ii. 81; Cipolla, p. 665; Lombardi, *Delle attinenze Storiche fra Scienza ed Arte in Italia*, Bergamo, 1879, p. 230 sq.

next poetical adulation was in Latin upon his protector's unjust and cruel triumph in Volterra,¹ an unworthy flattery, which, whatever may be said of it, had not even the excuse of gratitude, since he had already flattered, before he had received favours, in order to receive them.²

As a reader of the classics in the *Studio*, he was regarded as superior to Filelfo, Guarino, and others. It was because he preached by example as well as by precept.³ If, as he stated, thanks to others, many spoke Greek at Florence⁴ (probably an exaggeration), thanks to him, Latin written, if not spoken, almost reached the excellence of the models. He does not imitate any one, he seems to be one of them, and they inspired him as much as the Italians when he wrote in the vulgar tongue. From them he caught the secret of elegance and style, of taste and art.⁵ He not only knew the ancients, but he belonged to them, a marvellous superiority in "this orator of erudition and poet of criticism,"⁶ this respected professor and corrupted canon, who was employed in embassies, and merited his master's favours through the unenviable talents of the learned courtier.⁷

¹ *Sylva*, l. iii. p. 45 sq. See edition entitled *Prose Volgari inedite e Poesie Latine e Greche edite ed inedite di Angelo Poliziano, raccolte ed illustrate da Isidoro del Lungo*, Florence, 1867.

² See on Poliziano Ginguen , iii. 378, 515; Em. Guidici, i. 446; Villari, i. 46; M hly, *Angelus Politianus, Ein Culturbild aus der Renaissance*, Leipzig, 1864, translated into Italian by the Abb  Brunetti, Venice, 1865; Bonafous, *De Angeli Politiani Vita et Operibus Disquisitiones*, Paris, 1845. See also our *Histoire de la Litt rature Italienne*, and that of M. L. Etienne.

³ If ranks were judged by salaries, Landino would be the first with 300 florins, Poliziano the second with 250, then Chalcondyle with 200, and Fonte with 60, Filelfo remaining without a rival. See Fabroni, *Hist. Acad. Pis.*, i. 373; Prezziner, i. 163.

⁴ "Prim  nobilitatis pueri . . . ita sincere attico sermone, ita facile expediteque loquuntur ut non delet  jam Athen  atque a Barbaris occupat , sed ips e sua sponte cum proprio avuls  solo, cumque omni, ut sic dixerim, sua supellectile in flor. urbem immigrasse, eique se totas penitus que infudisse videantur" (*Oratio in expositione Homeri*, in Prezziner, i. 167).

⁵ See G. Capponi, ii. 178.

⁶ Villemain, *La Litt rature au Moyen Age*, le on xxii. See F. O. Mencken, *Historia Vit  A. Politiani*, Leipzig, 1736.

⁷ See Villari, *Nic. Mach.*, i. 209.

He did not make his master familiar with Greek and Latin, but he inspired him with a taste for both. To a large extent he helped to make of him a refined *dilettante*, who, like his ancestor, hunted for precious manuscripts henceforth in Italy—an arduous hunt, since all the lords and princes shared the same passion.¹ Upon this subject the authentic documents contain curious information. We find Lorenzo begging Ercole d'Este to lend him Dion Cassius, and Ercole refusing, in spite of their friendly relations, only allowing him to have a copy. This refusal seemed so natural that Lorenzo was not offended by it; later, he returned to the charge, but more modestly asked, instead of the original, Niccolò Leonicensi's translation,² and he prepared the way by lending himself to the Duke of Ferrara a manuscript copy of Leone Battista Alberti's book on architecture. The Duke, decidedly averse to lending books, devised an ingenious method of compliance; he hastily ordered a copy of the solicited translation, and only sent it to Florence on condition that it was neither printed nor lent to any one.³

Abroad, in oppressed and barbarous lands, Lorenzo was more successful. In his name, and with the permission of Bajazet II., John Lascaris scoured all Greece in the search for manuscripts. In a second voyage he acquired two hundred

¹ In 1470, Niccolò Roberti, orator of Ferrara at Florence, had the third decade of Titus Livy translated in the vulgar tongue, copied, and paid forty *bolognini* in gold per quire. The copyist wanted forty-five, or a florin of *suggello*. He demanded five months, and it was foreseen that he would take six. There were fifty-two pages to be copied. With the miniatures and the pamphlets, each quire cost a ducat (Roberti to Alberto d'Este, March 2, 1470; *Atti e mem.*, i. 250, 251). This same Roberti found the first decade of Titus Livy, and paid eighteen ducats for it (March 10, 1470; *ibid.*, p. 251).

² Leonicensi, doctor and philologist, born at Lonigo, in the Vicentine, in 1428, one of the first to return to the method of the Greek doctors, Hippocrates, Paul of Ephesus, &c. See Angiolgabriello, *Biblioteca degli Scrittori Vicentini*, ii. 188; P. Jove, *Elogia*, No. 70; Papadopuli, *Hist. Gymnasii Patavini*, i. 297; Fabricius, *Bibl. lat. med. et infimæ ætatis*; Tiraboschi, vol. vi. part ii. l. ii. c. iii. § 20.

³ Lorenzo to Ercole, February 5, 1486; *Atti e mem.*, i. 246 and 247, n. 1. This translation was only printed in 1532 at Venice, and the Greek text in Paris in 1548.

in the Greek tongue, of which eighty were quite unknown.¹ Mathias Corvinus's library, on his death (1490), afforded numerous and valuable acquisitions. In spite of his financial difficulties, Lorenzo annually expended on books 30,000 ducats, and maintained a number of copyists, who, upon his death, were thrown out of work. Even during his lifetime the extent of his services in this path were felt. "Your zeal in having Greek books copied and in protecting the learned," Poliziano wrote to him, "does you more honour than any other man has earned for years."² When Fra Giocondo of Verona, architect and archæologist in one, made a precious collection of ancient epigraphs, till then unequalled, he dedicated it to Lorenzo.³ Called thither by Lorenzo, or attracted by the renown of his circle, and sure of finding in his palace a library rich in precious manuscripts, a real museum of antiquities, and encouragement, learned men from all parts of Italy crowded to Florence. Amongst others were Bartolommeo Scala, Ermolao Barbaro the younger, and Lorenzo Valla.⁴ They helped to edit the acquired books. Through the efforts of Demetrius Chalcondyle and Bernardo Nerli, the Homeric poems were published for the first time in Florence. The latter defrayed the expenses, and offered to dedicate them to Piero, Lorenzo's young son (1488). These were followed by other handsome editions of the Greek classics in capital letters.⁵ There was no longer any need to go to Constantinople to learn Greek. Masters and books abounded even at Ferrara and Milan. Petty noblemen and rich burghers, as well as the princes and great lords, attracted the learned at their personal expense, less

¹ Lascaris himself reports it. *Præfatio ad Anthologiam*, Florence, 1494. See Prezziner, i. 148.

² Venice, June 20, 1491. See *Prose Volgari*, ed. Isid. del Lungo, note 30, Florence, 1867.

³ Cipolla, p. 665.

⁴ On Lorenzo Valli there were special works: Zumpt, *Leben und Verdienste des Laurentius Valla*, in the *Journal des Sciences Historiques* of Prof. Schmidt, vol. iv. p. 397-434, 1845; Bahlen, *Lorenzo Valla*, Vienna, 1865.

⁵ Capponi, ii. 176.

perhaps from a sincere and individual love of letters than from ostentation and the spirit of imitation.¹

In imitation of the writers and poets of Rome, who formed an academy, and in 1470 had some of Plautus's comedies represented in Latin, Ferrara and Florence, going a step further, produced translations upon the stage, rather to popularise the old Roman comedies than to propagate the vulgar tongue; just as, from the need or the desire to be heard, the French preachers of the Middle Ages began to preach in French in spite of their preference for Latin. In 1486 Ercole d'Este had played at Ferrara the *Menechmi* of Plautus in an Italian translation made to order for the occasion. Two years later the same play was played in Florence, possibly in the same translation.

But the object in view was only partially accomplished; the idea was not yet conceived of giving frequent and regular representations for which the spectator paid. As in France and in Rome, the theatre was a part of the public festivities; princes, with an eye upon their neighbour, in the hope of surpassing him, raised and decorated the scaffolding for a single representation. Italy was proud if one or two took place in the year in one of her great towns. To taste this solemn pleasure crowds came from all parts. The spectacle being free, nobody had the right to find fault. The local chronicles only express universal admiration. Criticism, however, would not have been out of place; the choice did not always fall upon works of art. Seneca was preferred to Sophocles, and in Seneca the futile declamations on those general ideas, unknown in the Middle Ages, fresh fruit of the Renaissance gathered from the ancients,³ were applauded with frenzy.

¹ See Leo, ii. 244.

² Ald. Guidoni to Ercole, May 12, 1488; *Atti e mem.*, i. 301. In 1528, at Venice, an Italian translation of the *Menechmes* was printed, which was perhaps this one (Cappelli's note to pages 301 and 309 of vol. i. *Atti e mem.*).

³ See Sismondi, *De la Litt. du Midi*, ii. 50-52. It was the same with the French theatre of the sixteenth century.

Lorenzo's particular distinction was his protection of the Platonic Academy, founded by his grandfather, and its development under his care. He did not confine himself, like Cosimo, to offering an asylum to philosophic innovators; he disputed with them in his gardens, and often at his table; for his banquets were frequently a pretext for philosophising¹ and the perilous assertion² of the most audacious opinions.³ His guests and interlocutors were the friends already named, Christoforo Landino, whom Machiavelli calls the second father of the Florentine Academy,⁴ Angelo Poliziano, Marsilio Ficino, Luigi Pulci, and his two brothers, Luca and Bernardo, Girolamo Benivieni, Leone Battista Alberti, of whom more later, and finally Bernardo Rucellai and Pico de la Mirandola, of whom we must say something here.⁵

Bernardo Rucellai (1449-1514) was the grandson of Palla Strozzi, and Lorenzo's brother-in-law. When scarcely eighteen, he had married Giovanna de' Medicis. A merchant, diplomatist, cultured, a good writer, and author of small historical works,⁶ under his Latinised name, Oricellarius, he

¹ Marsilio Ficino speaks of two banquets of this kind, one at Careggi, Lorenzo's villa, the other at Florence, organised by Francesco Bandini, whom Lorenzo called his steward. See Bandini, ii. 38 *sq.*, who quotes (p. 63) a letter of Ficino on this subject. Prezziner, i. 169, gives the notes.

² See in Janitschek, p. 103, note 31, the text, which shows the accusations against the Platonists in the persecutions they underwent from Rome under Paul II.

³ Later, Giovanni Nesi, in a dialogue, *De Moribus*, dedicated to Piero de Lorenzo, wrote: "Si auctoritate incedendum est, Christi auctoritatem omnibus antepono; si ratione, apud Platonicos rationes quæ veritati nostræ magis consonent, præcipue reperturum me esse confido; post Platonem vero Aristotelem" (MS. of the Laurentiana, Plut. 77, cod. 24, in Janitschek, *Die Gesellschaft der Renaissance in Italien, und die Kunst*, p. 103, note 30, Stuttgart, 1879. There are four lectures.)

⁴ Prezziner, i. 133.

⁵ In Bandini we find, *Specimen Literaturæ Florentinæ*, the names of the members of the Academy, and many details about their works, their feasts, and their fate. Cf. Sieveking, *Geschichte der Platonischen Akademie zu Florenz*, Göttingen, 1812; Puccinotti, *Di Marsilio Ficino e dell' Accademia Platonica Fiorentina nel secolo xvo*, Prato, 1865. This is an extract of the *Storia della Medicina* from the same.

⁶ *De Bello Italico, De Bello Pisano, De Urbe Roma*. The latter work is both elegant and erudite.

was destined to replace Lorenzo as the protector of the Academy, and to throw open his beautiful gardens to the philosophers,¹ amongst whom were the poet Luigi Alamanni and the immortal historian Niccolò Machiavelli, until a sentence of exile after an abortive conspiracy closed the Academy (1522).²

Giovanni Pico de la Mirandola was one of the last arrivals in the corrupted society of the Medici. He only joined it in 1484, then hardly twenty-two. Fed upon the severest teachings, above all by Savonarola, whom he loved and admired, he was regarded as a man of learning and a saint.³ A man of learning he certainly was; as for a saint, that is another thing, and he soon lost that reputation. He caused a scandal by a love affair, with which he was reproached by those the most capable of a like offence. The adventure deserves notice as it is characteristic of the times.

Pico had gone to Arezzo, where he had a very handsome mistress, who had been twice married, first to "a grocer who kept horses for the races of the *palio*," and afterwards, in the year of her widowhood (1486), to one Giuliano de' Medicis, a poor exciseman at Arezzo, to whom she had brought money. A few months later she fell violently in love with Pico, *cieca di si bel corpo*, according to the passably coarse despatch which acquaints us with the story. The fair Margherita resolved to abandon her husband's roof. One fine day she left the town to take a walk, and met Pico, who was accompanied by some twenty men, half on foot and half on horseback. Shamelessly and openly she jumped up behind him, and off they rode. Such audacity noised the escapade abroad. The bells were rung, and the fugitives were chased and overtaken, whence a brawl, in which there were dead and wounded on both sides,

¹ The famous Orti Oricellaria, between Scala Street and the meadow, to-day the *borgo* of Ognissanti, of which more later.

² Bandini, *Specimen*, &c., ii. 82-85; Prezziner, i. 128 *sq.*; Ginguené, iii. 104; Reumont, *Tav. Cron.*

³ "Oltre la dottrina sua, era riputato uno santo" (Ald. Guidoni to Ercola, May 12, 1486; *Atti e mem.*, i. 282).

especially on Pico's, whose escort was nearly destroyed. He and his chancellor—for being a lord, he was not too young to have one—escaped death and pillage by the fleetness of their horses, and they sought refuge in Marciano, where they were at once imprisoned. The Ten were apprised, and ordered that Count Pico be restored to liberty and the chancellor retained. Then, as if ashamed, they changed their minds, and had the eloper incarcerated again, and five or six days afterwards had him again liberated,¹ the poor scapegoat chancellor always paying the piper for his master. As for the worthless creature, cause of all the trouble, she was looked upon as a victim. She was sacred because of her marriage with one of the Medici, “poor, no doubt, but still one of the house.”² The husband's rôle in this ugly affair was no better than that of the rest. Pride was not his failing. The faithless wife had only to assert that she was carried off against her will for him to take her back. In repudiating her, he would have been obliged to return her money-bags.³

Feeling foolish enough, Pico flung himself more furiously than ever into study, and became celebrated by his proposition to sustain in Rome nine hundred theses *de omni re scibili*. Like a good disciple of Ficino, he wanted to expound therein the bond which unites Platonism and Christianity. But the Curia declared thirteen of these theses heretical, and Innocent VIII. forbade their discussion.⁴ This only lent them greater notoriety,

¹ Ald. Guidoni to Ercole, May 17, 1486; *Atti e mem.*, i. 283.

² “E abbenchè creda che il conte Giovanni non sia per avere male alcuno, credo che il cancelliero ne farà male, perchè è reputato che fosse uno capestro da cui sia processo ogni male. E credo che gli nuocerà assai lo essere stata quella donna moglie al presente di uno de' Medici; e benchè sia povero, pur è della casa” (Ald. Guidoni to Ercole, May 12, 1486; *Atti e mem.*, i. 282).

³ Ald. Guidoni, *ibid.*; Domenico Berti, *Cenni e documenti intorno a Giov. Pico della Mirandola*, in the *Rivista Contemporanea*, vol. xvi., Turin, 1859; note of Cappelli after the minute of the despatches of Guidoni, *Atti e mem.*, i. 282. Berti believes in an elopement by force in spite of the assertions of one Luigi della Stufa, who formally maintains the contrary. There are arguments for and against both assertions, but the woman's impudence and immodesty are likely enough.

⁴ Bull. of August 5, 1486. *Bullarum Rom. ampl. collectio*, vol. iii. part iii. p. 210, 211, Rome, 1743.

and Lorenzo took the part of his follower ; he defended both his opinions and his person. "The Count lives like a saint," he wrote three years after the love-scandal to his ambassador at the court of Rome.¹ He did not live long enough to see absolution granted to Pico. It was only granted in June 1493 by the new Pope, Alexander VI., who could not show himself too indulgent for this kind of misdeed. Later, Savonarola from the pulpit announced the death of his former disciple, and treated him with much severity ; he sent him to purgatory because of his late return to religion.²

The influence that Lorenzo exercised over so many distinguished men may partly be explained by the privileged position which his grandfather had made him, since his father, so inferior to both, had also enjoyed it after the one and before the other ; but his keen, broad, and curious mind also contributed its share. He was interested in all questions of the day, above all, in one that ought to have been solved after Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio—that of deciding whether the Italian tongue was suitable, like Greek and Latin, to the expression of general ideas, and consequently to replace both. With his accustomed sagacity, he pronounced for the affirmative,³ as did Leone Battista Alberti ;⁴ and so strongly did he convince certain minds, that the learned Bernardo Rucellai, in his correspondence with Erasmus, refused to write any more in Latin.⁵

¹ Lorenzo to Lanfredini, June 19, 1489, in Fabroni, *Vita Laur., Doc.*, p. 291. Cf. Reumont, ii. 110 *sq.*, and Roscoe, vol. ii. p. 113 *sq.* of French translation.

² *Prediche sopra Aggeo*, pred. 6, f. 46 r°, Venice, 1544.

³ See a passage from him translated in Etienne, *Hist. de la Litt. Ital.*, p. 182, and upon the obstacle raised by the worship of antiquity to the development of the vulgar tongue, Ugo Foscolo, *Prose Letterarie*, vol. iii. p. 53, 61, Florence, 1850.

⁴ "Ben confesso quell' antica latina lingua essere copiosa molto e ornatissima ; ma non però veggo in che sia la nostra oggi toscana tanto da averla in odio, che in essa qualunque benchè ottima cosa scritta ci dispiaccia ? A me pare assai di presso dire quello che io voglio e in modo ch' io sono pure inteso ; ora questi biasimatori in quella antiqua sanno se non facere, et in questa moderna se non biasimare e vituperare chi non tace" (L. B. Alberti, *Della Famiglia*, preface to Book iii. in Janitschek, p. 102, n. 21).

⁵ "Bernardum Auricularium, civem florentinum, cujus historias si legisses dixisses

Lorenzo supported his theories by practice. He walked to prove movement, as Galileo did later; or rather, without seeking to prove anything, he solved the difficulty. Thereto he was impelled, not only by instinct and taste, but also by his slight knowledge of ancient tongues. Without being a poet, he wrote very pretty verses, for which he deserves praise, as, since Petrarch and Boccaccio, there is no other poet in the vulgar tongue who is worth quoting. He joined the broken chains, and took up poetry where the fourteenth century had left it.

This gift had been transmitted him. Following his mother's example, whose spiritual lauds¹ have been published, he wrote sacred rhymes. If he were not superior in these to Savonarola and Benivieni, who subsequently wrote so much religious twaddle in verse, except in his "Representation" or the "Mystery of SS. John and Paul,"² he succeeded better in the profane style. He has left more than a hundred and forty sonnets, and twenty *canzone*, in honour of Lucrezia Donati, whom he does not name, and whom he loved, as Petrarch loved Laura, with a purely imaginative love,³ while he arranged her marriage in Rome.⁴ His piquant satire upon drunkenness,

alterum Sallustium, aut Sallustii temporibus scriptas, nunquam tamen ab homine impetrare licuit ut mecum latine loqueretur. Subinde interpellabam; surdo loqueris, vir præclare, vulgaris linguæ vestratis sum ignarus quam Indicæ. Verbum latinum nunquam quivi ab eo extundere" (Erasmus, quoted by Em. Giudici, *Stor. della Lett. Ital.*, i. 351).

¹ *Rime sacre del Mco Lorenzo de' Medici il vecchio, di Madonna Lucrezia sua madre e d'altri della stessa famiglia*, collected by Francesco Cionacci, a Florentine priest, 2nd edit., Bergamo, 1760.

² The *Rappresentazione di San Giovanni e Paolo* may be found at the end of Lorenzo's poetry, edit. of Bergamo, 1763. See on this subject Ginguené, iii. 510-513.

³ See *Lorenzo de' Medici, Poesie*, Bergamo, 1763. Another edition has been published by M. Carducci, Florence, 1859. Lorenzo's works (*Lorenzo dei Medici Opere*) have been gathered into several volumes, Florence, 1825. See Ginguené, iii. 489, on Lorenzo's poetry; Villari, *Nic. Mach.*, i. 200 sq., and also Capponi, Reumont, Carducci, in a simple address before Lorenzo's poetry (edit. Barbera). Carducci, like Roscoe and Ruth, greatly exaggerates Lorenzo's literary merit.

⁴ See *Tre lettere di Lucrezia Tornabuoni a Piero de' Medici ed altre lettere di vari concernenti al matrimonio di Lorenzo il Magnifico con Clarice Orsini*, published by Ces. Guasti, Florence, 1859. Villari (*Nic. Mach.*, i. 201) remarks that the mother of Lorenzo describes Clarissa's person, but says nothing of her heart, her mind, or her character.

I Beoni, and his moral and philosophical poem, *L'Altercazione*, which is clear and noble, though in a rough and inharmonious, almost infantile style, are praised. But he excelled above all when he borrowed from the Tuscan *contadini* their naïve idiom, as in the *Nencia di Barberina* and in his *Canti Carnascialeschi* or Carnival songs, which his courtiers dared to place above Dante's poetry. It is evident that much must be accepted as exaggeration. Lorenzo had not even the merit of originality attributed to him, since this style was the fashion even before Boccaccio.¹ But he revived these songs, so coarse and licentious that the boldest of our days would hesitate to produce them, even in a private circle, the sole theme of which is the day's enjoyment and pleasure, without any thought of the morrow, and rendered them not a whit more moral. He added an expressive sprightliness and grace to thoughts familiar to himself and his people, and his songs were the crown of the Carnival festivities, of which he became the *impresario*, whose ancient splendour he increased, and which occupied too important a place in his day not to be mentioned.

His agents collected horses, chariots, and trophies at great expense. They dressed up a number of persons of the lower class to represent either a conqueror's triumph, or some chivalrous theme, or the symbolic pomp of arts and crafts. During the evening and half the night, these brilliant processions filed through the streets in the torchlight shed by their escorts on foot. The chariots were sometimes surrounded by three hundred masked cavaliers, and masked too were the personages perched upon these moving trestles. The chants were repeated by the crowd, and the dances were measured by them. Ballads, *canzone* for one or four voices, or a chorus were sung

¹ In Boccaccio (5th day, 10th Novel, vol. ii. p. 387) the queen asks Dioneo for a *canzone*, a Carnival song, and Dioneo offered her several very licentious ones. Manni shows us that Boccaccio himself did not invent this style. See upon this subject one of Cappelli's notes, *Atti e mem.*, i. 313, append. Cf. Reumont, ii. 23, 24; Cipolla, p. 662; Villari, i. 45; Witte, *Ueber den Minnegesang und das Volkslied in Italien*, in Reumont's Annual, called *Italia*, Berlin, 1838.

—in a word, the famous Carnival songs that made the whole world light of heart.¹

Lorenzo ordered the display, furnished the poems, saw them put to music, and kept an eye upon all the details.² His pleasure lay in such things, as we have seen, and it vexed him to be distracted therefrom by business.³ They were one of the springs of his policy, half as narrow again as that of the Roman emperors. Accepting their well-known device, he suppressed bread and furnished games. He did not think himself obliged to anticipate famine and blight, or to remedy these evils, but spectacles helped a race who delighted in them to forget its hunger. The sole excuse for this unpardonable frivolity, and this selfish, and doubtless imprudent, policy, lies precisely in the very poems he wrote for the need of the hour, and which awakened a taste for the popular tongue. This happy result was reached rather than pursued, and the exaggerations of the Ciceronians contributed much more to it than Lorenzo's example. From the day it became a law, in speaking Latin, to employ Cicero's vocabulary, the use of Latin was confined to a select number, and became more and more foreign to the majority, and in the constant intercourse of life it was necessary to speak the only language commonly understood. Thus the erudites, by their unmeasured fastidiousness, served the cause they would fain have injured. Lorenzo enjoyed the double advantage over them of knowing what he was about when he set the example, and of being in a position to secure imitators.

He had the fortunate chance of having among his courtiers more than one really gifted in letters, notably Luigi Pulci, who was a greater favourite than the rest, on account of a disposi-

¹ See the work entitled *Tutti i trionfi, carri, mascherate o canti carnascialeschi andati per Firenze dal tempo del M^{co} Lorenzo de' Medici fino all' anno 1559*, Cosmopoli, 1750. This collection was made by Anton Francesco Grazzini, surnamed Lasca. See chiefly his dedication to Francesco de' Medicis, prince of Florence, p. 39-44.

² Ginguené, iii. 503-505.

³ *Supra*, p. 374, n. 2.

tion similar to his master's. Lorenzo's mother, Lucrezia Tornabuoni, suggested to him the idea of the *Morgante Maggiore*, a poem founded upon the French style, which then was regarded as a novelty.¹ The recent wars against the Turks gave an interest to the songs of the old troubadours on the wars of Charlemagne against the Moors and Saracens. In Florence, Pulci, like Boiardo in Ferrara,² gave an elegant form (*aulique* Dante would have said) to these coarsely popular but serious songs, and rendered them frivolous by the turn of his wit and the despised tongue he used. Pulci sometimes borrows too much from the Tuscan vernacular, seeming grave when he means to be playful, and commonplace when he attempts fine writing.

Liberated, like the greater part of his contemporaries, from all belief, this canon of fifty prefaces his songs with ecclesiastical poems, the *Gloria in Excelsis*, the *Magnificat*, and the *Te Deum*; but he slides at once into audacities of thought and license of expression and taste. An invocation to the Virgin is followed by one to Venus, and then by risky scenes and a satire on the immortality of the soul, without any intention on the part of this aged juggler to destroy religion or chivalry. The grossest pleasantries upon sacred things follow the most polished irony, and he sneers at the readers who go to church in submission

¹ Pulci admits that Lucrezia put the pen into his hand:—

“Perchè donna è costì che forse ascolta,
Che mi commise questa storia prima.”

(*Morgante Maggiore*, ch. xxviii. st. 2.)

The *Morgante* was published for the first time in Florence in 1482. Luigi was the youngest of three brothers (1431–86). Luca Pulci was the author of the *Ciriffo Calvaneo*, published about 1490, reprinted by Audin in Florence, 1832, and of the *Driadeo d'Amore*. Bernardo Pulci wrote burlesque poems. On the origin of Pulci's poetry, see G. Paris, *Histoire Poétique de Charlemagne*, Paris, 1865, and P. Raina, *Ricerche intorno ai Reali di Francia*, Bologna, 1872. Cf. Villari, *Nic. Mach.*, i. 220 sq.

² Count Boiardo (1430–94), statesman and governor of Reggio, had not time to finish his *Orlando Innamorato*, which was recast sixty years later by Berni. Boiardo is very superior to Pulci in the variety and novelty of his adventures and in richness of colouring.

to a popular error,¹ and at the women who laugh, and are not shocked by anything. Pulci shows us the mirror of the fifteenth century as Sacchetti does that of the fourteenth.² The soul, he writes, enters the body like jam enveloped in hot white bread. It is believed that in the other world it will find fig-peckers and plucked ortolans; but once descended into the black valley, there will be no more singing of *alleluias*. Whatever there may be serious in the thought is spoiled by the frivolity of form, and nevertheless it was by form that this improviser marked out his place in the history of literature. He enriched the language and perfected the stanza, which with him is lighter than Boccaccio's, and not so low as that of the other rhymers. On this point he was the model for those who came after him.³

His verses, like Lorenzo's, were understood and appreciated by everybody, and helped to vindicate the vulgar tongue. They were recited canto after canto, as were those of the old jugglers, for the unfinished poem was of an indefinite length.⁴ It was one of the favourite pastimes at the master's table, where the woman who had inspired the poet no longer presided,⁵ in those orgies whose excessive freedom was not tempered by the presence of Clarissa Orsini, and other women of this court of commoners. At least they began to understand that literary ideas may be expressed in Italian, and this was proved in different styles by other men of letters. The erudite Landino translated Pliny

¹ Not long afterwards Bandino declared that to get on well in the court of Rome it was necessary to hold some erroneous opinion or dogma, and thus Luther heard a priest celebrating mass say at the moment of consecration: *Panis es et panis manebis*. We know with what horror Luther left Rome fourteen days after his arrival. See upon him Taine, *Philosophie de l'Art*, i. 177, Paris, 1881, 3rd edit.

² See Villari, *Nic. Mach.*, i. 225; *Gir. Sav.*, i. 47; Cipolla, p. 663; Em. Giudici, i. 415 *sq.*; Sismondi, *Litt. du Midi*, ii. 52-55.

³ This judgment, which would be bold on the part of a Frenchman, is that of Gino Capponi, a very competent judge. See *Stor. di Fir.*, ii. 117.

⁴ See Guicciardini, *Stor. di Fir.*, c. ix. vol. iii. p. 86, 90. On the Italian poetry of the day, see Ruth, *Histoire de la Poésie Italienne*, Leipzig, 1844; Ranke, *Zur Geschichte der italienischen Poesie*, Berlin, 1887.

⁵ "Ma non pensai che innanzi al fin morisse."

(*Morg. Magg.*, ch. xviii. st. 126.)

the Elder (1456), commented upon Dante in Italian (1481), whom everybody else annotated in Latin, an assured means, especially through printing, of spreading a taste for the divine poet, who until then belonged to the class rich enough to purchase manuscripts, or intimate enough with the learned to borrow them. Avoiding the too frequent trivialities of Pulci and Lorenzo, Landino was the first to make a noble use of the tongue—a signal service and an important conquest. These divergent efforts recall the aim of the sixteenth century in France. Poliziano, seeking the form of Italian poetry in Greek and Latin authors, reminds us of Ronsard; Lorenzo and Pulci, of Malherbe collecting old French words on the Place Maubert and on the market-place; Landino reminds us of so many writers who, revolted by the unrestrained vulgarity in the French language, imposed upon themselves, in order to impose upon others, the rules of a noble and purified style. Only, Landino and Lorenzo were necessary to accomplish the task of Malherbe, who drank at both sources, and made everything yield to his authority.

This parallelism is justified from another point of view. Just as the idiom of the Isle of France invaded the provinces, so did the Florentine idiom. At first Tuscan became Italian by force of circumstances and the attraction of superiority, without any particular person being able to claim honour therefor. In Italy, where dialects and brogues are much more numerous than in France, all those who prided themselves on their learning wrote Florentine, not only in their relations with the magistrates of the Republic, but in corresponding one with the other, or in addressing the public of the whole Peninsula. Tuscan became the common tongue. The despatches of Nicodemo Tranchedini and of his successor, Sacramoro, to their master in Milan were written in Tuscan, as were also those of Aldovrandino Guidoni and of Manfredo Manfredi to their masters in Ferrara, and the histories of the Milanese Bernardino Corio and of Pandolfo Collenuccio, a native of

Pesaro. When Lodovico il Moro wrote his testament, we can see that, in using the dialect of his province, he endeavoured to write Tuscan, and that he was convinced he had succeeded.¹ The difference was that the Florentines, as was natural, wrote it the best; but with the others there is a visible progress from Corio to Collenuccio,² and from Tranchedini to Guidoni. If we would understand what further progress there still remained to make, we must read, after the despatches of the "foreigners," those of Francesco della Casa and of Gentile Becchi, under Lorenzo's son, both good writers,³ one polished and attic, the other, despite his advanced age, pungent and full of fire. It was not without difficulty, even then, that the inhabitants of the other towns reached their level. When from Ferrara, a literary centre too, Savonarola came to attic Florence, he spoke so badly that the monks laughed at him.⁴ He corrected himself later, and learnt the proper use of words without ever acquiring the graces of ordinary speech, in which the Florentines excelled. Only Ariosto succeeded in this, and he alone deserves a place between Berni and Machiavelli.⁵

Time was needed for this. The very predecessors of these two exquisite writers had needed it also. No doubt we cannot compare the despatches of an anterior period, written in studied Latin, with the polished despatches of the end of the fifteenth century; but place beside them the letters of Rinaldo des Albizzi, Ser Lapo Mazzei, and Alessandra Macinghi-Strozzi, and we will realise the progress achieved by the use of the more correct Latin of the Renaissance, which, though no longer used, left its stamp upon the mind, and vindicating its partial

¹ Documents of Italian history copied in Paris by G. Molini, vol. i., at the end, quotation of G. Capponi, ii. 193.

² This progress is all the more worthy of remark, as in reality Corio is superior to Collenuccio.

³ The despatches of Nicodemo Tranchedini are still unedited in Paris, except a few printed by Buser; those of Aldobrandino Guidoni are in vol. i. of the *Atti e mem.*; those of Francesco della Casa and of Gentile Becchi, with others, in vol. i. of M. Desjardin's collection. These will be largely quoted in the following chapter.

⁴ Capponi (ii. 194) refers us to Cambi for this fact. I have not found it.

⁵ Capponi, ii. 194.

defeat, exercised its power where it reigned supreme in the right way—that is, without making its power felt.¹

Ermolao Barbaro averred that letters owed much to the Florentines, and among them principally to the Medici—among the Medici, above all to Lorenzo.² This statement we may accept. Lorenzo proved the sincerity of his love of letters by a constant practice of them.

In art, for which he displayed no practical taste, and in which he showed himself at best a *dilettante*,³ the decline was, on the contrary, visible,⁴ though merely accidental, as the sixteenth century proves. Instead of hunting for causes, we should find them in the caprices of nature, which now grants and now refuses, at one time gives us an isolated genius and at others a group according to her fancy; in the insufficiency of the models, busts, medallions, and slight fragments of little importance exposed in the gardens and museum of the Medici; in the very dangers of favour, if we must believe Rumohr, as, to please the Mæcenas and gain wealth, work was produced hurriedly and with insufficient care.⁵

There are many exceptions, however. Under Cosimo, we

¹ It is not necessary to note here the progress of science at the end of the fifteenth century, because it was unimportant, and true science was not yet quit of the false. See on this subject Roscoe, vol. ii. p. 136 *sq.*, ch. vii., Fr. trans.

² Giov. Corsi, *Vita del Ficino*, published by Bandini, p. 34; quotation of Prezziner, i. 137.

³ Nic. Valori (*Vita Laurentii*, p. 18) speaks of Lorenzo's ecstasies when he was brought any antique remains. Ginguéné goes further (iii. 392); he holds that his knowledge of art almost equalled that of artists, an assertion it would be difficult to prove.

⁴ The following list shows how little the great artists of the fifteenth century can have owed Lorenzo, who was born in 1448 and died in 1492:—

Fra B. Angelico, born in 1387, flourished in 1447, died in 1455				
Masaccio, „ 1401 „ 1420 „ 1428				
Brunelleschi, „ 1377 „ 1400 „ 1446				
Ghiberti, „ 1378 „ 1400 „ 1455				
Donatello, „ 1386 „ 1420 „ 1466				
Filippo Lippi, „ 1406? „ 1456 „ 1469				
Ghirlandajo, „ 1449 „ 1474 „ 1494				
Botticelli, „ 1447 „ 1460 „ 1510				

The dates of the births and deaths are borrowed from the last edition which the brothers Milanese have issued of Vasari, i. in-8.

⁵ Rumohr, ii. 417.

have seen that masterpieces were long meditated and slowly executed. Under Lorenzo, Michael Angelo, whose style was formed rather in Rome, where antique masterpieces and whole statues abounded, got his education in Florence from a few reliefs. But if Lorenzo gave an occasional order, such as a monument for Filippo Lippi at Spoleto and a bust for Giotto at Santa Maria del Fiore, this is hardly a reason to fall into ecstasies, and he certainly cannot be charged with having encouraged great and useful works as much as he ought. Let us give an example.

If any work was necessary and useful in Florence, it was the completing and decoration of the cathedral which Arnolfo of Cambio and Brunelleschi had not been able to finish. Like Santa Croce and many other churches, it had no façade, and the ugliness of this defect was the more conspicuous as it fronted the admirable Baptistery. In 1491 a pronounced movement of public opinion insisted upon a façade. Designs were sent from all parts. The most skilful masters were commissioned to judge them, and amongst these were such foreigners as Perugino and Luca Signorelli. This proves that it was not a purely local interest, and that at least in art there were no frontiers. The judges met on January 5th. The projects were already classed when the Canon Benci, invited to give his opinion, declared, like a good courtier, that he could not have another than Lorenzo's, who was present, and understood architecture. Bartolommeo Scala and Antonio Malegonella agreed with him. Seeing that an adjournment was desired, Piero Nasi requested that, at any rate, the delay should not be too long. All eyes were turned toward Lorenzo. He praised the projects, but insisted upon the difficulties, and decided for an indefinite adjournment. Piero Machiavelli and Antonio Manetti hastily expressed their assent, and those who disagreed maintained a prudent silence.¹ The adjournment was

¹ See the verbal process of this meeting in Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, vii. 243. It is curious that Vasari says nothing of this feature, which is so little creditable

for centuries. With our eyes we have seen this hideous façade that Lorenzo might have decorated, but would not.

His theories upon art deserve no greater approbation. He held a singular opinion for a merchant's son—that only the well-born are capable of reaching perfection in all things, and that in the common class, who work with their hands, and have no leisure to cultivate their minds, thought and real genius are wanting.¹ In compliance with this theory, he disowned the masters of obscure origin who proved him in the wrong; as, for example, Leonardo da Vinci, sculptor no less than painter,² and as such entitled to the patronage of a man who preferred sculpture to painting, preferred even mosaic as fitter for transmitting the memory of the great of the earth.³ Lorenzo must have held the common class in great contempt, and have been but indifferently able to judge these matters, when such a selfish preference did not help him to secure the services of this great genius at a time when, in defiance of all facts, he regretted that the sculptors were much less numerous than the illustrious painters of the day.⁴

Need we be astonished that idealism vanished in this very real lack of painters? It calls for elevated minds disdainful of success and self-interest. Now, in art, as in letters, Lorenzo encouraged realistic tendencies. The favoured painters were the realists, the uncompromising realists. In chronological order the first were the brothers Antonio and Piero del Pollajuolo (1433, 1443–98). From their father, a goldsmith, they had acquired precision of line and clearness of surface. Not of the stamp to attempt more, they remained the slaves of their education. They copied bronze far better than nature.

to Lorenzo. Elsewhere, in Andrea del Sarto's Life (viii. 267), he speaks of the wooden façade of S. M. del Fiore, the architecture of Jacopo Sansovino, painted by Andrea del Sarto.

¹ Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, vii. 203, Life of Torrigiani, a Florentine sculptor.

² We know that he made a statue of Lodovico the Moor for one of the squares of Milan, which was destroyed by Charles VIII.'s soldiers.

³ Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, v. 83, Life of Ghirlandajo.

⁴ *Ibid.*, xii. 163, Life of Michael Angelo. See Ranalli, p. 221–224.

It was as a goldsmith that Antonio was esteemed, and he was called by his contemporaries "alone in his art."¹ By his *nielli*, a *genre* forgotten since antiquity, restored in the fourteenth century, and neglected again when it produced copper engraving, he encouraged, together with Maso Finiguerra, Sandro Botticelli, and Andrea Mantegna,² an art too often despised, which has preserved for us many perishable masterpieces of painting.³

But Antonio also rendered services to painting, to which his brother confined himself. He was one of those who taught the use of oil in the Florentine school, and his study of the nude by its very excess was an instruction. If Vasari admires too much the swelling veins and the tense muscles in a painted archer who bends with an effort to draw his bow, it was not profitless for art that the two brothers dissected corpses, and this Lorenzo doubtless understood when he encouraged a search for detail. Perhaps he did not realise the drawback, the sacrifice of the laws of composition, in which consists the superiority of Giotto and his school. To preserve, together with the minute and faithful reproduction of nature, a sense of selection and the ideal, a greater genius than that of these brothers was necessary, but they possessed at least science and vitality, and they followed Andrea del Castagno, their master, without inspiring regret for his loss.⁴

¹ "Unico nell' arte sua" (Letter of the Signory to Domenico Bonsi, orator in Rome, February 13, 1497, in Gaye, i. 340).

² Baldinucci, Dec. v. part ii. sect. iii. vol. iii. p. 1-5; Rosini, iii. 129; Reumont, *Tav. Cron.*; Capponi, ii. 175; Ranalli, p. 214-216.

³ Amongst others, Leonardo's Last Supper, already nearly effaced, and Masolino's work in the Collegiate Church of Castiglione, between Tradate and Varese, a province of Como. The history of this painting is to-day well known. In the eighteenth century the architect wanted to whiten it, thinking whitewash would produce a better effect. As the system did not work, he dispensed with it, to the general dissatisfaction. In 1843 the frescoes were restored. The Abbé Malvezzi published them in thirty-two lithographic plates, with notes. See Vasari, ed. Lem., in-8, ii. 270; Commentary of the Milanese, with the Life of Masolino.

⁴ Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, v. 90-103; Baldinucci, Dec. vi. part ii. sect. iii. vol. iv. p. 19-24; Rosini, iii. 124; Rio, i. 397-399; Rumohr, ii. 302; Leo, ii. 578; Forster, iii. 100, 102, 266; Crowe and Cavalcaselle, ii. 386.

In turn they were followed by Andrea de Domenico de Cioni, called Verrocchio (1432-88), because he had worked with the goldsmith, Giuliano Verrocchio.¹ Himself goldsmith, sculptor, master of perspective, painter, and musician as well, Andrea del Verrocchio had the advantage over the rest of his school to represent, in a modest way, the union of art and science that his disciple, Leonardo da Vinci, soon after represented in the highest degree. It is no small praise for the master of this great genius that good judges should be able to attribute his pupil's drawings to him.² If their style is similar, and if this style is admired in the disciple, may we not admire it in the master, and recognise in him the original upon which the other modelled himself? Nobody denies that Verrocchio imitated bronze too closely,³ that in modelling death's heads, the better to reproduce life, he did not feel that life ceases with suffering and decomposition. But he taught Leonardo to study conscientiously the laws of anatomy, and, thanks to him, his pupil acquired, in the reproduction of organic forms, a surety of touch, a delicacy and depth of expression, until then unknown.⁴

This shows us the path by which art escaped from the tyranny of realism that followed Masaccio. There were two currents, for the inheritance of conquerors is ever divided. On the one side was Filippo Lippi, who, in the reproduction of the real, preserved movement, action, and expression; on the other, Cosimo Rosselli, whose inspiration was commonplace, and whose execution was heavy, if vigorous. If Rosselli is one of the last painters of the preceding period,⁵ it was in this

¹ Del Migliore, *Riflessioni al Vasari*, MS. Magliab., quoted by Milanese in Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, v. 139, n. 3.

² Such is the case with Crowe and Cavalcaselle (iii. 405), who declare that Lorenzo de' Credi, another disciple of Verrocchio, places them in the same difficulty.

³ See his tombs of Giovanni and Piero de' Medici at San Lorenzo.

⁴ Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, v. 139-155; Baldinucci, Dec. v. part ii. sect. iii. vol. iv. p. 25-29; Ranalli, p. 211; Crowe and Cavalcaselle, iii. 401-403; Forster, iii. 110-115.

⁵ Rosselli, born in 1439, made his will in 1506. He was hardly thirty when Cosimo died.

period that he became an oracle, not through his sacred pictures, wherein he imitated Angelico without suavity or delicacy,¹ but through those in which he made excessive use of gold and crude colours. A sorry oracle nevertheless. In invention and design² he is the most insignificant of the painters who decorated the Sistine Chapel.³

Like Andrea del Verrocchio, Sandro de Mariano Filipepi took the name of the goldsmith with whom he worked, and in the history of art is known as Sandro Botticelli (1447-1515); and like him, too, he lacked unity, and worked to suit the variable taste of those who paid him well. Following old Buffalmacco in coarse pleasantries⁴ and Filippo Lippi in painting, he borrowed from the latter, if not his able composition, at least his expression of feeling, in which, after Lippi's death, he was regarded as superior to his contemporaries.⁵ But, incapable of flying far upon his own wings, he returned to the style of the goldsmith-painters, and learnt from Pollajuoli and Verrocchio to school his imagination, his fire, and his hand,⁶ until he became a fanatic follower of Savonarola, when he abandoned and cried shame upon his art.

He was followed in this uncertain path by his principal disciple, Filippo Lippi (1460-1505), son of the Carmelite Filippo Lippi and the novice Lucrezia Buti, whose scandalous

¹ Some of Rosselli's pictures have been attributed to Angelico, chiefly his Coronation of the Virgin at Santa Maria Maddalena des Pazzi (Rio, i. 423). Crowe and Cavalcaselle regard Rosselli as a very distant substitute of Angelico.

² Vasari says alternately that Rosselli drew well and badly. See ed. Lem., v. 27, 31, 32. The brothers Milanese point out this contradiction.

³ Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, v. 118 sq.; trans. Jeanron, iii. 165; Baldinucci, Dec. v. part ii. sect. iii. vol. iv. p. 6-9; Roscoe, chap. ix. trans., vol. ii. p. 236; Rio, i. 423; Eug. Müntz, *Un Mécène Italien au XV^e Siècle (Revue des Deux Mondes, November 1, 1881, p. 161)*; Rumohr, ii. 265, 272; Leo, ii. 213, 577; Crowe and Cavalcaselle, ii. 520, 522.

⁴ See Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, v. 118 sq.

⁵ Vasari, *Vie de Fil. Lippi*, ed. Lem., in-12, iv. 129.

⁶ See the Adoration of the Wise Men, ordered by the Medici for S. M. Novella, and his History of Moses, which Rumohr (ii. 272) regards as a masterpiece of execution and expression; Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, v. 110-127; Baldinucci, Dec. viii. part ii. sect. iii. vol. iv. p. 60-65; Rosini, iii. 126-131; Ranalli, p. 253; Crowe and Cavalcaselle, ii. 415-419; Rumohr, ii. 272; Forster, iii. 301.

story has been related by Vasari. With such a father he did not confine himself to a study of his master, and the examples of the former helped him to surpass the latter. A good colourist, Filippino excelled in miniature, in portraits, and landscape, despite his eccentricities. He was above all a decorator for public feasts, an important function under the dissipated and extravagant rule of Lorenzo. This decorator was, as well as the painters whom we have mentioned, a painter of the decadence, and of a very visible and advanced decadence too.¹

It was necessary, however, to notice them, if only to mark the difference between this period and the preceding. But its greatest product, the only one who stamps in a measure the Florentine school, was Domenico de Tommaso Curradi de Doffo Bigordi, whose interminable name has been replaced for posterity by his graceful surname, Ghirlandajo (1449-98).² A jeweller's son, like so many other artists, he was brought up as a goldsmith, and likewise was under the influence of sculpture in bronze, but he was better able to assert his independence. Exact and vigorous, he felt the need as well as the power of creation, and he understood that creation must depend upon the past. In his studies, he went back as far as Giotto, returned to the great laws of composition, which his contemporaries neglected, and by observing them he reached the unity the others lacked. Thus, though inferior to Giotto, he took up his work, and profited by all that had intervened. He learnt perspective and proportion, and light and shade, from the architects. He applied the laws of *chiaro-oscuro* to the human body as well as to its surroundings; by aërial perspective he completed the progress of Uccello and Piero de la Francesca³ in linear perspective, the last victory

¹ Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, v. 242-263; Roscoe, chap. ix., trans., vol. ii. p. 232; Rosini, iii. 131, 133; Ranalli, p. 258; Rio, i. 389, 421; Crowe and Cavalcaselle, ii. 352; Rumohr, ii. 272; Leo, ii. 577; Forster, iii. 328.

² Or rather Del Grillandajo, either because he manufactured garlands or his father sold them.

³ Piero de la Francesca, born 1415 to 1420, still alive in 1494, was so pene-

to be won by the technique of painting. In addition, he took from the school of Masaccio lessons in beauty, dignity, and truth. He did not even disdain to study Baldovinetti, whose influence we can perceive in his work.¹

Thanks to these conscientious studies and to such wide attainments, he resembled that rare personage, an eclectic, who preserves his own originality; he appropriated preceding conquests, and attained in all its perfection the virile and temperate style which is distinctively Florentine. He never rises to the sublime; he knows neither the flights of Masaccio nor the splendour of Lippi, but his charm is irresistible. For his contemporaries this charm was, above all, displayed in the portraits that he drew with fidelity, and painted with such truth and energy of expression, as suggest a talent not far from genius. Even in our days we are still interested in the Florentine society, long since vanished, but revived upon these walls, with its costumes as faithful to the truth as unsuitable to the subjects treated, an anachronism which must be accepted in the whole Italian school.² History may be obdurate upon the subject, but art criticism, more tolerant, is under the charm of the incontestable merits of this attractive painter: the lively and varied expression of the heads, the natural amplitude of the garments, the nobility of composition, and, since he insisted on disdaining the use of oil, his painting in distemper, which has withstood the test of centuries.³ In the qualities wherein

trated by the spirit of the Florentine school that he may be regarded as of it, although he belonged to Borgo San Sepolcro, as he had many of its great qualities. He is a link in the chain which joins Leonardo and Fra Bartolommeo to Peselli and Baldovinetti. See Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, iv. 13-24; Rio, i. 405; Ranalli, p. 174; Crowe and Cavalcaselle, ii. 530.

¹ Vasari, ed. Lem., *Vie de Baldovin.*, iv. 105; *Vie de Ghirland.*, v. 73-83.

² This is how we owe to Ghirlandajo the faithful and life-like portraits of the Medici, of Gentile Becchi, Lorenzo's tutor, of Cristoforo Landino, Poliziano, Marsilio Ficino, Ginerva des Benci, and others. From infancy he drew flying likenesses of passers-by.

³ Painting in distemper is a sort of water-colour upon a dry ground, whereas the fresco is executed on cool stucco, a *buon fresco*. Ghirlandajo hardly ever retouched his work. See Delaborde, i. 110.

he excels, and in which he perfected himself with age, only one other superseded him, and that was his pupil, Michael Angelo; and to have formed such a pupil is certainly not the least of his merits.²

The chief of the reigning school was still in the plenitude of power when, toward 1480, there broke out a serious and dangerous crisis in art. Lorenzo had not had the will nor the power to give to painting and sculpture the exclusively pagan direction, as his well-known ideas would have us believe. But he had other ideas which have been ignored, designedly or not, lest they might disturb the folds of the robe artificially draped to preserve the unity of the personage, and throw dust in the eyes of posterity. Like the rest of his family, Lorenzo was quite ready to encourage religious art and to order religious pictures. How often has the subject of the Epiphany been treated by command of the Medici! Botticelli and Ghirlandajo introduced the family into their paintings as the wise men of the East or Oriental kings.³ Filippo Lippi, still more of a courtier, painted a page holding a royal crown over Lorenzo's head, the only thing lacking to his sovereignty.⁴ The wealthy *popolani* were not more exclusive. One of them, in 1481, undertook to decorate the Church of Sant' Agostino at San Gimignano, confided the choir to Benozzo Gozzoli, and ordered Antonio Pollajuolo to paint a coronation of the Virgin.⁵

¹ See his Saint Jerome and his Last Supper in the convent of Ognissanti (1480), his frescoes in the Sassetti chapel at Santa Trinita (1485), and those of the choir of S. M. Novella (1490). These last are really admirable.

² Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, v. 65-89; Baldinucci, Dec. viii. part ii. sect. iii. vol. iv. p. 54-59; Rosini, iii. 140; Ranalli, p. 250-252; Rumohr, Leo, ii. 577; Forster, iii. 359-375; Crowe, ii. 460-462; Rio, i. 402-409; Eug. Müntz, *Un Mécène*, &c., p. 161; Taine, *Voy. en Italie*, ii. 148; *La Philosophie de l'Art*, ii. 395. MM. Crowe and Cavalcaselle carry their admiration for Ghirlandajo to enthusiasm. M. Taine is severe, even to injustice. With the exception of Michael Angelo, he treats most of the painters, to Raphael, as he once treated the French Revolution.

³ See Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, v. 115, on the subject of Botticelli's Epiphany, lost to-day.

⁴ Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, v. 251, and n. 5.

⁵ Rio, i. 397.

The churches continued to be the chief resort of unbelievers as well as of the faithful, and to set up for a Mæcenas in this way was for the monied class a means of aggrandisement, and for the aristocrats, or would-be princes, an opportunity to impress their own features upon their countrymen, who were likely to become their subjects. It was merely an exception when a few dared to ornament the places of sacred worship with pictures representing pagan or familiar scenes.

This eclecticism of the Pagans did not, of course, prevent Paganism from predominating in art. Even the religious painters aided the general tendency in this respect by their ignorance or their disdain of the technical progress accomplished in painting, and the heads of the Church thrust the public taste down the slope. At a time when Bembo, a Pope's secretary and a future cardinal, spoke of "the hero Jesus-Christ" and "the virgin goddess," we need not be surprised that Philaretus sculptured the loves of Jupiter and Leda upon the very gates of the Vatican.¹

But this freedom was none the less a license, and the custom was an abuse. Hence a religious reaction, which broke out when circumstances were favourable. The death of three or four of the naturalist painters whom public admiration had invested with an uncontrolled authority left the field free. The want of unity so visible in Botticelli and Rosselli, imitators now of Angelico, and now of Andrea del Castagno, indicate a growing revolution. Ghirlandajo, though he was not an idealist, did not fall into Pagan realism. Perugino, fed upon the precepts of the Florentine school by Piero de la Francesca, and a pupil, at Florence, of Andrea del Verrocchio, preserved his natural aptitude for religious painting, which made him the favourite painter in convents. In this town, so long given to scoff at religious matters, many of the people remained

¹ Ch. Yriarte, *Florence*, Paris, 1881, and *Revue des Deux Mondes*, October 15, 1880, p. 817.

under the influence of the monks, and shared their indignation at the obscenities, and even the nudities of art. A naked Charity of Andrea del Castagna painted on a door was destroyed by the neighbours.¹ Certain frescoes of Santa Croce were in like manner outraged, because they represented several scenes of the Passion with a crudity that shocked popular piety. The heads and arms of the Jews disappeared. "They imagined," says Vasari, "they were thus avenging our Lord."²

Savonarola was destined to bring about a general and regular upheaval of these feelings by his ardent exhortations. It will be seen farther on that he damaged art cruelly by flinging to the flames all nude and frivolous works, having for accomplices many painters among his friends, some of whom brought their own pictures to be burnt.³ These transient fanatics renounced for a time the art by which they lived, though none of them belonged to the seraphic school of Angelico, all, on the contrary, being more or less realists. But what is worthy of remark here is, that the brutality of this reaction was not necessary to restore Christian art, and that in fact it did not in the least restore it. It was under Cosimo, and not under Lorenzo or subsequently, that this art reached its climax, and consequently entered the era of decline. The Dominican innovator had, doubtless, on this subject the ideas of a spiritualist and a Catholic. He believed that beauty proceeds from proportion, and proportion from the soul;⁴ but in blaming the painters for arraying the Virgin in splendid attire instead of painting her poorly clad, as more natural,⁵ was he quite exempt from the contagion of realism? At heart he only wanted one thing, both from art and from

¹ Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, iv. 150.

² *Ibid.*, iv. 144.

³ *Ibid.*, vii. 153, *Vie de Baccio della Porta*.

⁴ *Pred. 28 sop. Ezechiel*, Venice, 1520, and Villari, i. 472.

⁵ *Pred. sop. Amos e Zaccaria*, Saturday after second Sunday in Lent, in Villari, i. 473.

poetry, that neither should interfere with his moral reform,¹ but this he so strongly desired, that, despite universal complaints, in 1498 he renewed the *auto-da-fé* of 1497.²

As for his friends, who, being carried away, had burnt the works which they doubtless loved, we have only to examine those of their pictures which were painted afterwards, or which, as not containing nudities, escaped the flames, to recognise that faith did not bring them back to the Christian traditions of art. Botticelli, as we have seen, was far from being an innovator; the Della Robbia followed to the best of their ability in the profane path of their uncle and great-uncle; no sign of Christian faith is to be seen in the remarkable works of Simone del Pollajuolo (1457-1508), whom the Florentines scoffingly called the *Cronaca*, because of the chronicles or stories he unceasingly painted of the Romans.³ He has the merits befitting an artist of the Renaissance. He continued the building of the Strozzi Palace, which had been begun with the coarse roughness of ancient Florentine architecture, and the upper portions, which were his, so far from recalling the Etruscan or cyclopean style, as the under parts and the Pitti Palace, are of a supreme elegance. They display the progress of a taste acquired by a study of antique art, and at the same time the substitution of grace for strength, the sign of a new age.⁴

¹ See his ideas on poetry in his *Opus perutile de divisione ac utilitate scientiarum: in poeticon apologeticus*, Venice, 1542. The analysis may be found in Villari, i. 474-480.

² See *Pred.* 10 *sup.* *Ezechiel*, at the end, February 9, 1497, and our *Jér. Savonarole*, i. 253.

³ See the hall of the Grand Council, the sacristy of San Spirito, the church of San Francesco on the hill of San Miniato, which Machiavelli called *la sua villanella*, and the Strozzi Palace which he built for Filippo Strozzi, son of that Alessandra Macinghi whose letters we have so often quoted when writing of the period anterior to the Medici. Filippo, exiled to Naples, was so lucky in trade as to furnish the king, Ferrante, with money in his war against the barons. Wishing to pay his debt without opening his purse, Ferrante obtained from Lorenzo Filippo's recall, who henceforth continued to amass wealth in Florence, where he died in 1491, leaving orders for his heirs to continue his palace under pain of forfeiting their inheritance. This palace is, however, still unfurnished. See Ranalli, p. 199. *Cronaca's Life* is in Vasari, ed. Lem., vol. viii.

⁴ Perhaps it is not out of place in a history of Florence to state that the finely

Architecture had still a period of prosperity with Benedetto de Majano (1442-98), pupil of Brunelleschi and of Michelozzi,¹ with Mino de Fiesole, Desiderio de Settignano, the two San Gallo,² and the two Rossellini. At Santa Croce may be seen Bernardo Rossellini's superb tomb of Leonardo Bruni, in striking contrast with those of Michael Angelo, Galileo, and others, to the dishonour of this funeral basilica, and this same architect furnished the first plans and directed the early building of St. Peter's in Rome.³ But the decline began to appear with Andrea Contucci of San Savino (1460-1529). This servile imitator of antiquity even excused himself for a defect in the columns he built by pointing out a similar one in those of the Pantheon.⁴ Truly it was not the decline, but the end. After Lorenzo's death all love of the great and beautiful died among the architects. At the beginning of a period of troubles that might be prolonged, they emigrated, seeking lucrative employment for their talents in more peaceful towns.⁵

The painters were not to a similar extent driven to emigration. The finest masterpieces cost infinitely less than the least important edifices. All the same, if art continued to prosper in Florence, it was due to the two great geniuses who rank with the highest without having enjoyed Lorenzo's capricious patron-

wrought iron of the Strozzi Palace was the work of a smith who was an artist in spite of his rough ways, Niccolò Grosso, surnamed Caparra, because he insisted upon an earnest before undertaking any work. He was called the last of the Republicans, because one day when working for some poor people, and Lorenzo came in person to order some iron, he refused to do anything for him until he had finished what he had begun for the poor people before the lord had come, and whose money was as good as his. See Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, viii. 119.

¹ Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, v. 128-138.

² Giuliano de San Gallo (1443-1534) gave Lorenzo and the Duke of Calabria plans for palaces; he built for Lorenzo the convent of San Gallo, and for Giuliano Gondi, a merchant returned from abroad with great wealth, a palace in front of San Firenze. See Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, vii. 209-228; Ranalli, p. 203.

³ See Ranalli, p. 207; Rio, i. 441-452; Jeanron, iii. 119; Fil. Moisé, *Santa Croce di Firenze*, Florence, 1845.

⁴ Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, viii. 121-173; Ranalli, p. 205.

⁵ Ranalli, p. 203.

age, Leonardo da Vinci and Fra Bartolommeo della Porta. Fra Bartolommeo was easily consoled for this neglect, as his religious feeling opened to him the horizon of a higher ideal. Leonardo, who had not the same resource, was wounded by the master's neglect and the absence of all commissions, and soon made up his mind to go away. He only returned to Tuscany later by accident, and left none of his works there.¹ Leo X., in Rome, was no kinder to him than his father, Lorenzo,² and it was only in Lodovico il Moro and Francis I. that this marvellous genius found justice, tact, and taste.

Educated by Andrea del Verrocchio, but head and shoulders above his master, a man of science, an engineer, architect, sculptor, and painter, he created a precise theory of anatomy, while he had an accurate knowledge of the laws of line, he showed his sense of reality by the firmness of his drawing, and to this he joined the primitive simplicity of the religious painters, and noble aspirations toward the ideal. He set a seal upon the Florentine art of Peselli, the Uccelli, and the Pollajuoli, but with an originality lacking in them. His patient work united strength and grace—a rare gift. We may almost say that he was Michael Angelo and Raphael in one, and certainly his work had more grace than the one and more strength than the other. This marvellous painter of vapoury perspectives, distinguished for his elegant finish of design and modelling, his profound and melancholy expression, could, like Shakespeare, whom he thus resembles, drop from his altitude to the lowest degree of caricature. As for his incomparable "Supper," which he began in 1496, the subject of which had

¹ Leonardo left Florence for Milan in 1483. We hardly know what he did before thirty. Probably he studied, for he was more ardent in study than in production, which ought to explain his disfavour with the Medici. His Medusa's head in the Uffizi is about all that remains of his early sojourn in his country.

² In Vasari we find a contemptuous phrase of Leo X. upon Leonardo's method of working: "Costui non è per far nulla da che comincia a pensare alla fine innanzi al principio dell' opera." The painter had begun a work ordered by the Pope, "con stillare olii e erbe per far la vernice" (Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, vii. 35, Life of Leonardo).

been abandoned since Giotto's time, it was a new creation, and one of the masterpieces of art, the work of a brush that never knew decline, and never committed a graver error than that of squandering itself.¹

Leonardo honoured Florentine art, from which he sprang rather than represented it, for he had genius enough to carve a path for himself. The real and last representative of this art under Lorenzo, and even after him, was Bartolommeo or Baccio della Porta (1469-1517), who, an ardent adherent of Savonarola, of whom he has left us a masterly portrait, became a Dominican after his idol's death to save his soul.² A disciple of Cosimo Rosselli, he preferred, like his comrade and friend, Mariotto Albertinelli,³ the models left by Masaccio and Lippi, Orcagna, and even Giotto, to ancient bas-reliefs and statues; he went back as far as Giotto, and by this, with Leonardo and Ghirlandajo, formed one of the links in the chain which unites the early painters with Michael Angelo. If he does not reach their height and lacks their fire, at least he belongs to the same family.

As clever in large compositions as in portraits,⁴ he is admired for the beauty of his arrangement, the simplicity of his method, the clearness of his outlines, the strength of his figures, the calmness of expression, the understanding of perspective and exact proportions, the correct drawing, and the

¹ Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, vii. 11-79; Amoretti, *Memorie Storiche su Leonardo da Vinci*, Milan, 1804, reproduced in German by Gallemborg, but without criticism or addition. Milanese says it is the best work on Leonardo. Crowe, iii. 172-174, 121; Rio, 38-129; Leo, ii. 578. On Leonardo in France, Léon de Laborde, *La Renaissance des Arts à la Cour de François Ier*, and Rio, iii. 188.

² This portrait belonged to a Florentine poet, M. Ermolao Rubieri, who, in 1851, allowed me to have a copy of it made, and who bequeathed it to the convent of San Marco, where it is to-day.

³ Albertinelli (1475-1520?) was a partisan of the Medici. For a time separated from Baccio by politics, they were reconciled later, and he became his disciple in painting. See Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, vii. 180-187; Crowe and Cavalcaselle, iii. 181-183.

⁴ See his fresco of the Last Judgment at S. M. Nuova, and without referring again to his Savonarola, the admirable Saint Marc in the Pitti palace, which is rather a picture than a portrait.

sober and transparent colouring, which does not diminish too much the brilliancy of the Venetian school. Though devout, he painted his Madonnas naked before robing them, and this is why, beneath the draped garments, he accentuated the human body so excellently. He united the Christian purity of the old masters to the Pagan beauty of the new, and kept both within the just limits of a grave and noble decorum without returning to hieratic art. More than any one else he combined the views and qualities of the masters he could not equal. He owed his piety and simple habits to Savonarola; to Leonardo his turn of mind, as his tendency to make a foil of the real for the ideal; to Michael Angelo his imposing style, and to Raphael and Angelico his grace. He was perhaps even a greater eclectic than Ghirlandajo, but he appropriated what he borrowed and preserved his individuality without incurring the reproach of servility. The marvellous mixture of refined taste and acquired science in Florentine art was personified in this monk, and has no representative who sums it up with a rarer union of diverse qualities.¹

For the moment I will end with Fra Bartolommeo. Our only interest in speaking of Lorenzo de' Credi (1459-1537) is to show how the grandson of the goldsmith Oderigo de' Credi, who left such useful *Ricordi*,² was but the imitator of Leonardo and Perugino, his fellow-pupils, and of Fra Bartolommeo, his contemporary; how this follower of Savonarola, who flung his works into the flames, showed his inferiority by a too minute regard for detail,³ and how cold he is when

¹ Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, vii. 150-179; Marchese, *Memorie dei più Insigni Pittori, &c.*, *Domenicani*, ii. 405; Baldinucci, Dec. ix. part ii. sect. iii. vol. iv. p. 82-89; Capponi, ii. 174; Crowe and Cavalcaselle, iii. 181-183, 427-436; Taine, *Voy. en Italie*, ii. 181; Rio, *Leonard de Vinci et son Ecole*, Paris, 1855; Ch. Clément, *Michel-Ange, Léonard, Raphaël*, Paris, 1861; G. Gruyer, *Bartolommeo della Porta e Mariotto Albertinelli*, in-4, Paris, 1887.

² These Records are in vol. iv. of the *Arch. Stor. Ital.*, 1st ser. We have quoted them more than once in the preceding volumes.

³ "La qual troppa estrema diligenza non era forse più lodevole punto che si sia una strema negligenza" (Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, viii. 208).

compared with Perugino, how feeble compared with Leonardo.¹ It was not he, but Andrea del Sarto (1488-1534) and Michael Angelo (1475-1564), above all, who crowned the Florentine school.² But they both belonged to a subsequent period.³ At the end of the fifteenth century their authority was not yet great enough to render ridiculous by force of contrast the obstinacy of a few in painting after a style anterior to Masaccio, and mistaking stiffness for grace and coldness for simplicity.⁴

The Sistine Chapel, entirely due to the Florentines, if we except the part which Perugino can claim, was needed for the measure of the great Buonarroti to be taken. He inspired a sort of religious terror by the grand and the colossal, and nobly represented divine power with the restrained resources of art, and appeared, as has been said, "like an eagle in the midst of little birds," damaging even Raphael's reputation.⁵ But we must first recognise that the little birds cut no contemptible figure until the eagle eclipsed them. Afterwards he soared too high to be imprisoned in the Florentine school, a cage too narrow for this bird of swift flight, who would have broken all its bars. The school could not even follow him, save in his weaknesses, that bound him to solid earth, or rather in his violent exaggerations, which, for the profit of the decadence, broke away from the traditions of harmony due to Brunelleschi.⁶

¹ Vasari, ed. Lem., in-8, viii. 202-210; Crowe, iii. 405; Villari, i. 470, note.

² One of Michael Angelo's chief masters was Luca Signorelli of Cortona (born towards 1411, died after 1524), pupil of Piero de la Francesca, whom he greatly admired. See upon Signorelli, Vasari, ed. Lem., in-12, vi. 136-158; Ranalli, p. 255-257.

³ Michael Angelo's name began to be on everybody's lips in 1511, when Leonardo returned to Florence. See Crowe and Cavalcaselle, iii. 221.

⁴ Rosini, iii. 146.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 147. The sculptor Etx relates that when he admired Michael Angelo in the Sistine Chapel he was filled with pity for Raphael, an unjust feeling which has not escaped M. Taine. But he adds, that afterwards continuing a copy of Raphael, he asked his pardon for having undervalued him. See Etx, *Conférences à l'Ecole des Beaux-Arts*.

⁶ See Delaborde, i. 96; Leo, ii. 584. A library might have been made of all that has been written upon Michael Angelo. We will return to the subject elsewhere, and only name a few. Aurelio Goti, *M. A. Buonarroti*, Florence, 1875;

But Florentine art had its day of splendour. If it can be said of Florence that she was the Mecca of artists and the Athens of Italy, it was because the universality of genius and talent that honoured her prove the greatness of her school. In this they were true disciples of Greece, who gave the name of architect-sculptors to artists. Andrea del Castagno and his pupils brought painting nearer to sculpture, as Ghiberto and his school brought sculpture nearer to painting. Peselli and Baldovinetti innovated if they did not perfect, and Pollajuoli and Andrea del Verrocchio enlarged the new method. Alberti, Leonardo, and Michael Angelo based art upon science, enriched it by sentiment, and thus pushed and carried it to the apex. They were all Florentines, as were Cimabue and Giotto, who renewed the art of painting, and Orcagna and Masaccio, by whom it made such strides toward perfection, and Ghirlandajo and Bartolommeo, who pursued its successful development.

The rage of the public everywhere accepted the lessons of Florence, the good as well as the bad, the errors of Pollajuoli and Verrocchio no less avidly than the wisdom of Fra Bartolommeo, Leonardo's vitality, and Michael Angelo's boldness. Upon all sides the Florentines were asked to make tombs and statues; for Venice, Donatello made an equestrian Gattamelata, and Verrocchio a Picinnio. Florentines set up the statues of Sforza, Borso, and Colleoni. Their genius reigned at Sienna, Urbino, Ferrara, Rimini, Mantua, and Padua, and even to some extent in Venice, which, nevertheless, had its own particular art.

The Florentines deserved this favour so general and so lasting. They did not limit themselves to the condition of pompous decorators; they were simple and true, learned and

a speech of Augusto Conti, *L'Animo del Buonarroti* in *Atti della R. Accademia della Crusca*, 1875-76, Florence, 1876, p. 5-31; Nagler, *Michel Angelo Buonarroti als Künstler*, Munich, 1836; Hermann Grimm, *Leben Michel Angelo's*, Berlin, 1862. Rio has extracted from his work on *L'Art Chrétien* a volume entitled *Michel-Ange et Raphael*, Paris, 1867; Ch. Clément, *Michel-Ange, Léonard, Raphael*, Paris, 1861.

strong, and they hid their science and force under their grace. Energetic but sober, proud but elegant, they exercised discretion in drawing and in colour. They possessed measure, balance, taste, and delicacy; they restored to honour that selection, so long neglected, which imparts harmony, makes for the ideal, and which until then was the exclusive glory of the Greeks. This marvellous union of faculties, these flights towards the best, which shows a world superior to ours, are henceforth the honour of the Florentines; an admirable work of concentration, which was little by little accomplished under various rulers.¹

If we except the hours of convulsion and the pauses in which productive nature seems to doze, the democracy, the oligarchy, and the disguised monarchy can each claim its part in this evolution. Giotto and his great school flourished under the democracy; under the oligarchy were born, grew, and flourished those men of genius whose efforts were crowned under the quasi-monarchical government of Cosimo.

On the other hand, we must admit that art began to wane under Lorenzo, as his domination inclined more and more to declared monarchy. If a little later it lifted itself to still unknown heights, it was on the eve of, in the midst of, or just after the revolution that for the moment overthrew the Medici. Finally, it was after the restoration of the Medici, become grand-dukes, and consequently absolute monarchs, after 1530, that the irredeemable decline set in.

Let us then cease to believe in the necessity, if not in the utility, of Mécenas. He is only necessary to architects whose conceptions go beyond the narrow limits of private buildings; but then the state, whatever its form, can fill the rôle. Aristocratic Venice and democratic Florence both proved this, in spite of commercial preoccupations, the expenses of

¹ Leo, enthusiastic about the Medici, whose suppression of the Republic he approves, tries to lower Florentine art to increase the importance of the services rendered by them to this art, and to do so he pits Sienna against it (ii. 222). If he had carried back his reflection to earlier times, he would always have seen the same difference between Florence and Sienna, for this was fundamental, and depended neither upon accident nor family, nor on two or three men.

war, and the troubles of public life. Everything depends upon habit. We can accustom ourselves to the troublous emotions of free existence as to heat and cold, for everything is relative in this world. Perhaps even the agitations of a free commonwealth are fitter to awaken and excite intelligence than the dull tranquillity of servitude.

The period in which Lorenzo is the chief actor is particularly overrated in all that concerns art. Leonardo lived abroad, and Michael Angelo came later. In letters also the movement toward erudition dates farther back, and was then but a continuation. The only new thing was the return to the vernacular tongue, and the honour of this is partly Lorenzo's, but only partly. If his example gained a few conversions, this is not enough to justify the view that all progress was centred in one single man—a false view of that history, such as courtiers have transmitted to us, and such as those who prefer to repeat than to judge and contradict, have reproduced. But these exaggerations are customary in history. Thus, to limit ourselves to the Medici, history calls this sixteenth century the era of Leo X.—though Leo X. only saw the first twenty-one years of it—during which more than once he gave proof of an unreliable taste. His predecessors, Nicholas V., Sixtus IV., and Julius II., had done as much, and more, for letters and art, and none of them gave his name to a century. No doubt, Lorenzo weighs more than his father and son, but less than his grandfather, in the scales wherein are measured their merits and their services. If in any way he should seem even Cosimo's superior, it is because the work accomplished by the latter paved the way for his. And finally, if the Medici cut a great figure before posterity, it is above all because they form a series, a dynasty, and that their reign was lasting.

BALLANTYNE PRESS
PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE, HANSON AND CO
EDINBURGH AND LONDON

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JUL 19 1993

